THE

LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,

EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.

WITH A

Preliminary View of the French Revolution.

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

———————Sed non in Cæsare tantum
Nomen erat nec fama ducis; sed nescia virtus
Stare loco, solusque pudor non vincere bello;
Acer et indomitus, quo spes quoque ira vocasset,
Ferre manum, et nunquam temerando parcere ferro;
Successus urgere suos; instare favori
Numinis; impellens quidquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret, gaudensque viam fecisse ruina.
LUCANI *Pharsalia*, Lib. I.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE extent and purpose of this Work have, in the course of its progress, gradually but essentially changed from what the Author originally proposed. It was at first intended merely as a brief and popular abstract of the most wonderful man, and the most extraordinary events, of the last thirty years; in short, to emulate the concise yet most interesting history of the great British Admiral, by the Poet-Laureate of Britain. The Author was partly induced to undertake the task, by having formerly drawn up for a periodical work (*The Edinburgh Annual Register*), the history of the two great campaigns of 1814 and 1815;[1] and three volumes were

[1] Several extracts from these Annals have been blended with the present account of the same events.

the compass assigned to the proposed work. An introductory volume, giving a general account of the Rise and Progress of the French Revolution, was thought necessary; and the single volume, on a theme of such extent, soon swelled into two.

As the Author composed under an anonymous title, he could neither seek nor expect information from those who had been actively engaged in the changeful scenes which he was attempting to record; nor was his object more ambitious than that of compressing and arranging such information as the ordinary authorities afforded. Circumstances, however, unconnected with the undertaking, induced him to lay aside an *incognito*, any farther attempt to preserve which must have been considered as affectation; and, since his having done so, he has been favoured with access to some valuable materials, most of which have now, for the first time, seen the light. For these he refers to the Appendix at the close of each, volume where the reader will find several articles of novelty and interest. Though not at liberty in every case to mention the quarter

from which his information has been derived, the Author has been careful not to rely upon any which did not come from sufficient authority. He has neither grubbed for anecdotes in the libels and private scandal of the time, nor has he solicited information from individuals who could not be impartial witnesses in the facts to which they gave evidence. Yet the various public documents and private information which he has received have materially enlarged his stock of materials, and increased the whole work to more than twice the size originally intended.

On the execution of his task, it becomes the Author to be silent. He is aware it must exhibit many faults; but he claims credit for having brought to the undertaking a mind disposed to do his subject as impartial justice as his judgment could supply. He will be found no enemy to the person of Napoleon. The term of hostility is ended when the battle has been won, and the foe exists no longer. His splendid personal qualities —his great military actions and political services to France, will not, it is hoped, be

found depreciated in the narrative. Unhappily, the Author's task involved a duty of another kind, the discharge of which is due to France, to Britain, to Europe, and to the world. If the general system of Napoleon has rested upon force or fraud, it is neither the greatness of his talents, nor the success of his undertakings, that ought to stifle the voice or dazzle the eyes of him who adventures to be his historian. The reasons, however, are carefully summed up where the Author has presumed to express a favourable or unfavourable opinion of the distinguished person of whom these volumes treat; so that each reader may judge of their validity for himself.

The name, by an original error of the press, which proceeded too far before it was discovered, has been printed with a *u*,—Buonaparte instead of Bonaparte. Both spellings were indifferently adopted in the family; but Napoleon always used the last, and had an unquestionable right to chuse the orthography which he preferred.

EDINBURGH, *7th June*, 1827.

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LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

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VIEW OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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When we look back on past events, however important, it is difficult to recal the precise sensations with which we viewed them in their progress, and to recollect the fears, hopes, doubts, and difficulties, for which Time and

the course of Fortune have formed a termination, so different probably from that which we had anticipated. When the rush of the inundation was before our eyes, and in our ears, we were scarce able to remember the state of things before its rage commenced, and when, subsequently, the deluge has subsided within the natural limits of the stream, it is still more difficult to recollect with precision the terrors it inspired when at its height. That which is present possesses such power over our senses and our imagination, that it requires no common effort to recal those sensations which expired with preceding events. Yet, to do this is the peculiar province of history, which will be written and read in vain, unless it can connect with its details an accurate idea of the impression which these produced on men's minds while they were yet in their transit. It is with this view that we attempt to resume the history of France and of Europe, at the conclusion of the American war, a period now only remembered by the more advanced part of the present generation.

The peace concluded at Versailles in 1783, was reasonably supposed to augur a long repose to Europe. The high and emulous tone, assumed in former times by the rival nations, had been lowered and tamed by recent circumstance. England, under the guidance of a weak, at least a most unlucky administration,

had purchased peace at the expense of her North American Empire, and the resignation of supremacy over her colonies; a loss great in itself, but exaggerated in the eyes of the nation, by the rending asunder of the ties of common descent, and exclusive commercial intercourse, and by a sense of the wars waged, and expenses encountered for the protection and advancement of the fair empire which England found herself obliged to surrender. The lustre of the British arms, so brilliant at the Peace of Fontainebleau, had been tarnished, if not extinguished. In spite of the gallant defence of Gibraltar, the general result of the war on land had been unfavourable to her military reputation; and, notwithstanding the opportune and splendid victories of Rodney, the coasts of Britain had been insulted, and her fleets compelled to retire into port, while those of her combined enemies rode masters of the Channel. The spirit of the country also had been lowered, by the unequal contest which had been sustained, and by the sense that her naval superiority was an object of invidious hatred to united Europe. This had been lately made manifest, by the armed alliance of the northern nations, which, though termed a neutrality, was, in fact, a league made to abate the pretensions of England to maritime supremacy. There are to be added, to these disheartening and depressing circumstances, the decay of

commerce during the long course of hostilities, with the want of credit and depression of the price of land, which are the usual consequences of a transition from war to peace, ere capital has regained its natural channel. All these things being considered, it appeared the manifest interest of England to husband her exhausted resources, and recruit her diminished wealth, by cultivating peace and tranquillity for a long course of time. William Pitt, never more distinguished than in his financial operations, was engaged in new-modelling the revenue of the country, and adding to the return of the taxes, while he diminished their pressure. It could scarcely be supposed that any object of national ambition would have been permitted to disturb him in a task so necessary.

Neither had France, the natural rival of England, come off from the contest in such circumstances of triumph and advantage, as were likely to encourage her to a speedy renewal of the struggle. It is true, she had seen and contributed to the humiliation of her ancient enemy, but she had paid dearly for the gratification of her revenge, as nations and individuals are wont to do. Her finances, tampered with by successive sets of ministers, who looked no farther than to temporary expedients for carrying on the necessary expenses of government, now presented an alarming prospect; and it seemed as if the wildest and most en-

terprising ministers would hardly have dared, in their most sanguine moments, to have recommended either war itself, or any measures of which war might be the consequence.

Spain was in a like state of exhaustion. She had been hurried into the alliance against England, partly by the consequences of the family alliance betwixt her Bourbons and those of France, but still more by the eager and engrossing desire to possess herself once more of Gibraltar. The Castilian pride, long galled by beholding this important fortress in the hands of heretics and foreigners, highly applauded the war, which gave a chance of its recovery, and seconded, with all the power of the kingdom, the gigantic efforts made for that purpose. All these immense preparations, with the most formidable means of attack ever used on such an occasion, had totally failed, and the kingdom of Spain remained at once stunned and mortified by the failure, and broken down by the expenses of so huge an undertaking. An attack upon Algiers, in 1784-5, tended to exhaust the remains of her military ardour. Spain, therefore, relapsed into inactivity and repose, dispirited by the miscarriage of her favourite scheme, and possessing neither the means, nor the audacity necessary to meditate its speedy renewal.

Neither were the sovereigns of the late belligerent powers of that ambitious and active

character which was likely to drag the kingdoms which they swayed into the renewal of hostilities. The classic eye of the historian Gibbon saw Arcadius and Honorius, the weakest and most indolent of the Roman Emperors, slumbering upon the thrones of the house of Bourbon; and the just and loyal character of George III. precluded any effort on his part to undermine the peace which he signed unwillingly, or to attempt the resumption of those rights which he had formally, though reluctantly, surrendered. His expression to the ambassador of the United States was a trait of character never to be omitted or forgotten;—« I have been the last man in my dominions to accede to this peace, which separates America from my kingdoms - I will be the first man, now it is made, to resist any attempt to infringe it.»

The acute historian whom we have already quoted, seems to have apprehended, in the character and ambition of the northern potentates, those causes of disturbance which were not to be found in the western part of the European Republic. But Catherine, the Semiramis of the north, had her views of extensive dominion chiefly turned towards her eastern and southern frontier; and the finances of her immense, but comparatively poor and unpeopled empire, were burthened with the expenses of a luxurious court, requiring at

once to be gratified with the splendour of Asia and the refinements of Europe. The strength of her empire also, though immense, was unwieldy, and the empire had not been uniformly fortunate in its wars with the more prompt, though less numerous armies of the King of Prussia, her neighbour. Thus Russia, no less than other powers in Europe, seemed more desirous of reposing her gigantic strength, than of adventuring upon new and hazardous conquests. Even her views upon Turkey, which circumstances seemed to render more flattering than ever, she was contented to resign,* in 1784, when only half accomplished; a pledge, not only that her thoughts were sincerely bent upon peace, but that she felt the necessity of resisting even the most tempting opportunities for resuming the course of victory which she had, four years before, pursued so successfully.

Frederick of Prussia himself, who had been so long, by dint of genius and talent, the animating soul of the political intrigues in Europe, had run too many risks, in the course of his adventurous and eventful reign, to be desirous of encountering new hazards in the extremity of life. His empire, extended as it was, from the shores of the Baltic to the frontiers of Holland, consisted of various detached portions, which it required the aid of time to consolidate into a single kingdom. And, accustomed to

study the signs of the times, it could not have escaped Frederick, that sentiments and feelings were afloat, connected with, and fostered by, the spirit of unlimited investigation, which he himself had termed philosophy, such as might soon call upon the sovereigns to arm in a common cause, and ought to prevent them, in the mean while, from wasting their strength in mutual struggles, and giving advantage to a common enemy.

If such anticipations occupied and agitated the last years of Frederick's life, they had not the same effect upon the Emperor Joseph II., who, without the same clear-eyed precision of judgment, endeavoured to tread in the steps of the King of Prussia, as a reformer, and as a conqueror. It would be unjust to deny to this prince the praise of considerable talents, and inclination to employ them for the good of the country which he ruled. But it frequently happens, that the talents, and even the virtues of sovereigns, exercised without respect to time and circumstances, become the misfortune of their government. It is particularly the lot of princes, endowed with such personal advantages, to be confident in their own abilities, and, unless educated in the severe school of adversity, to prefer favourites, who assent to and repeat their opinions, to independent counsellors, whose experience might correct their own hasty conclusions. And

thus, although the personal merits of Joseph II. were in every respect acknowledged, his talents in a great measure recognized, and his patriotic intentions scarcely disputable, it fell to his lot, during the period we treat of, to excite more apprehension and discontent among his subjects, than had he been a prince content to rule by a minister, and wear out an indolent life in the forms and pleasures of a court. Accordingly, the Emperor, in many of his schemes of reform, too hastily adopted, or at least too incautiously and peremptorily executed, had the misfortune to introduce fearful commotions among the people, whose situation he meant to ameliorate, while in his external relations he rendered Austria the quarter from which a breach of European peace was most to be apprehended. It seemed, indeed, as if the Emperor had contrived to reconcile his philosophical professions with the exercise of the most selfish policy towards the United Provinces, both in opening the Scheldt, and in dismantling the barrier towns, which had been placed in their hands as a defence against the power of France. By the first of these measures the Emperor gained nothing but the paltry sum of money for which he sold his pretensions, and the shame of having shown himself ungrateful for the important services which the United Provinces had rendered to his ancestors.—But the dis-

mantling of the Dutch barrier was subsequently attended by circumstances alike calamitous to Austria, and to the whole continent of Europe.

In another respect, the reforms carried through by Joseph II. tended to prepare the public mind for future innovations, made with a ruder hand, and upon a much larger scale. The suppression of the religious orders, and the appropriation of their revenues to the general purposes of government, had in it something to flatter the feelings of those of the reformed religion; but, in a moral point of view, the seizing upon the property of any private individual, or public body, is an invasion of the most sacred principles of public justice; and such spoliation cannot be vindicated by urgent circumstances of state-necessity, or any plausible pretext of state-advantage whatsoever, since no necessity can vindicate what is in itself unjust, and no public advantage can compensate a breach of public faith. Joseph was also the first catholic sovereign who broke through the solemn degree of reverence attached by that religion to the person of the Sovereign Pontiff. The Pope's fruitless and humiliating visit to Vienna furnished the shadow of a precedent for the conduct of Napoleon to Pius VII.

Another and yet less justifiable cause of innovation, placed in peril, and left in doubt and

discontent, some of the fairest provinces of the Austrian dominions, and those which the wisest of their princes had governed with peculiar tenderness and moderation. The Austrian Netherlands had been in a literal sense dismantled and left open to the first invader, by the demolition of the barrier fortresses; and it seems to have been the systematic purpose of the Emperor to eradicate and destroy that love and regard for their prince and his government, which in time of need proves the most effectual moral substitute for moats and ramparts. The history of the house of Burgundy bore witness on every page to the love of the Flemings for liberty, and the jealousy with which they have from the earliest ages watched the privileges they had obtained from their princes. Yet in that country, and amongst these people, Joseph carried on his measures of innovation with a hand so unsparing, as if he meant to bring the question of liberty or arbitrary power to a very brief and military decision betwixt him and his subjects.

His alterations were not in Flanders, as elsewhere, confined to the ecclesiastical state alone, although such innovations were peculiarly offensive to a people rigidly catholic, but were extended through the most important parts of the civil government. Changes in the courts of justice were threatened—the Great Seal, which had hitherto remained with the

Chancellor of the States, was transferred to the Imperial Minister—a Council of State, composed of Commissioners nominated by the Emperor, was appointed to discharge the duties, hitherto intrusted to a Standing Committee of the States of Brabant—their Universities were altered and new-modelled—and their magistrates subjected to arbitrary arrests and sent to Vienna, instead of being tried in their own country and by their own laws. The Flemish people beheld these innovations with the sentiments natural to freemen, and not a little stimulated certainly by the scenes which had lately passed in North America, where, under circumstances of far less provocation, a large empire had emancipated itself from the mother country. The States remonstrated loudly, and refused submission to the decrees which encroached on their constitutional liberties, and at length arrayed a military force in support of their patriotic opposition.

Joseph, who, at the same time he thus wantonly provoked the States and people of Flanders, had been seduced by Russia to join her ambitious plan upon Turkey, bent apparently before the storm he had excited, and for a time yielded to accommodation with his subjects of Flanders, renounced the most obnoxious of his new measures, and confirmed the privileges of the nation at what was called the Joyous Entry. But this spirit of conciliation

was only assumed for the purpose of deception; for so soon as he had assembled in Flanders what was deemed a sufficient armed force to sustain his despotic purposes, the Emperor threw off the mask, and, by the most violent acts of military force, endeavoured to overthrow the constitution he had agreed to observe, and to enforce the arbitrary measures which he had pretended to abandon. For a brief period of two years, Flanders remained in a state of suppressed, but deeply-founded and wide-extended discontent, watching for a moment favourable to freedom and to vengeance. It proved an ample store-house of combustibles, prompt to catch fire, as the flame now arising in France began to expand itself; nor can it be doubted, that the condition of the Flemish provinces, whether considered in a military or in a political light, was one of the principal causes of the subsequent success of the French republican arms. Joseph himself, broken-hearted and dispirited, died in the very beginning of the troubles he had wantonly provoked. Desirous of fame as a legislator and a warrior, and certainly born with talents to acquire it, he left his arms dishonoured by the successes of the despised Turks, and his fair dominions of the Netherlands and of Hungary upon the very eve of insurrection. A lampoon, written upon the hospital for lunatics at Vienna, might be said

to be no unjust epitaph for a monarch, once so hopeful and so beloved—*Josephus ubique Secundus—hic Primus.*

These Flemish disturbances might be regarded as symptoms of the new opinions which were tacitly gaining ground in Europe, and which preceded the grand explosion, as slight shocks of an earthquake usually announce the approach of its general convulsion. The like may be said of the short-lived Dutch Revolution of 1787, in which the ancient faction of Louvestein, under the encouragement of France, for a time completely triumphed over that of the Stadtholder, deposed him from his hereditary command of Captain-General of the Army of the States, and reduced, or endeavoured to reduce, the Confederation of the United Provinces to a pure democracy. This was also a strong sign of the times; for although totally opposite to the inclination of the majority of the States-General, of the equestrian body, of the landed proprietors, nay, of the very populace, most of whom were from habit and principle attached to the house of Orange, the burghers of the large towns drove on the work of revolution with such warmth of zeal and promptitude of action, as showed a great part of the middling classes to be deeply tinctured with the desire of gaining further liberty, and a larger share in the legislation and admi-

nistration of the country, than pertained to them under the old oligarchical constitution.

The revolutionary government, in the Dutch provinces, did not, however, conduct their affairs with prudence. Without waiting to organize their own force, or weaken that of the enemy—without obtaining the necessary countenance and protection of France, or co-operating with the malcontents in the Austrian Netherlands, they gave, by arresting the Princess of Orange (sister of the King of Prussia), an opportunity of foreign interference, of which that prince failed not to avail himself. His armies, commanded by the Duke of Brunswick, poured into the United Provinces, and with little difficulty possessed themselves of Utrecht, Amsterdam, and the other cities which constituted the strength of the Louvestein or republican faction. The King then replaced the house of Orange in all its power, privileges, and functions. The conduct of the Dutch republicans during their brief hour of authority had been neither so moderate nor so popular as to make their sudden and almost unresisting fall a matter of general regret. On the contrary, it was considered as a probable pledge of the continuance of peace in Europe, especially as France, busied with her own affairs, declined interference in those of the United Provinces.

The intrigues of Russia had, in accomplish-

ment of the ambitious schemes of Catherine, lighted up war with Sweden, as well as with Turkey; but in both cases hostilities were commenced upon the old plan of fighting one or two battles, and wresting a fortress or a province from a neighbouring state; and it seems likely, that the intervention of France and England, equally interested in preserving the balance of power, might have ended these troubles, but for the progress of that great and hitherto unheard-of course of events, which prepared, carried on, and matured, the FRENCH REVOLUTION.

It is necessary, for the execution of our plan, that we should review this period of history, the most important, perhaps, during its currency, and in its consequences, which the annals of mankind afford; and although the very title is sufficient to awaken in most bosoms either horror or admiration, yet, neither insensible of the blessings of national liberty, nor of those which flow from the protection of just laws, and a moderate but firm executive government, we may perhaps be enabled to trace its events with the candour of one, who, looking back on past scenes, feels divested of the keen and angry spirit with which, in common with his contemporaries, he may have judged them while they were yet in progress.

We have shortly reviewed the state of Europe in general, which we have seen to be ei-

ther pacific, or disturbed by troubles of no long duration; but it was in France that a thousand circumstances, some arising out of the general history of the world, some peculiar to that country herself, mingled, like the ingredients in the witches' cauldron, to produce in succession many a formidable but passing apparition, until concluded by the stern Vision of absolute and military power, as those in the drama are introduced by that of the Armed Head.

The first and most effective cause of the Revolution was the change which had taken place in the feelings of the French towards their government, and the monarch who was its head. The devoted loyalty of the people to their king had been for several ages the most marked characteristic of the nation; it was their honour in their own eyes, and matter of contempt and ridicule in those of the English, because it seemed in its excess to swallow up all ideas of patriotism. That very excess of loyalty, however, was founded not on a servile, but on a generous principle. France is ambitious, fond of military glory, and willingly identifies herself with the fame acquired by her soldiers. Down to the reign of Louis XV., the French monarch was, in the eyes of his subjects, a general, and the whole people an army. An army must be under severe discipline, and a general must possess absolute power; but the soldier feels no degradation

from the restraint which is necessary to his profession, and without which he cannot be led to conquest.

Every true Frenchman, therefore, submitted, without scruple, to that abridgement of personal liberty which appeared necessary to render the monarch great, and France victorious. The king, according to this system, was regarded less as an individual than as the representative of the concentrated honour of the kingdom; and in this sentiment, however extravagant and Quixotic, there mingled much that was generous, patriotic, and disinterested. The same feeling was awakened, after all the changes of the Revolution, by the wonderful successes of the individual of whom our future volumes are to treat, and who transferred in many instances to his own person, by deeds almost exceeding credibility, the species of devoted attachment with which France formerly regarded the ancient line of her kings.

The nobility shared with the king in the advantages which this predilection spread around him. If the monarch was regarded as the chief ornament of the community, they were the minor gems by whose lustre that of the crown was relieved or adorned. If he was the supreme general of the state, they were the officers attached to his person, and necessary to the execution of his commands, each in his degree bound to advance the honour

and glory of the common country. When such sentiments were at their height, there could be no murmuring against the peculiar privileges of the nobility, any more than against the almost absolute authority of the monarch. Each had that rank in the state which was regarded as their birthright, and for one of the lower orders to repine that he enjoyed not the immunities peculiar to the noblesse, would have been as unavailing, and as foolish, as to lament that he was not born to an independent estate. Thus, the Frenchman, contented, though with an illusion, laughed, danced, and indulged all the gaiety of his national character, in circumstances under which his insular neighbours would have thought the slightest token of patience dishonourable and degrading. The distress or privation which the French plebeian suffered in his own person, was made up to him in imagination by his interest in the national glory.

Was a citizen of Paris postponed in rank to the lowest military officer, he consoled himself by reading the victories of the French arms in the Gazette; and was he unduly and unequally taxed to support the expense of the crown, still the public feasts which were given, and the palaces which were built, were to him a source of compensation. He looked on at the Carrousel, he admired the splendour of Versailles, and enjoyed a reflected share of their

splendour, in recollecting that they displayed the magnificence of his country. This state of things, however illusory, seemed, while the illusion lasted, to realize the wish of those legislators, who have endeavoured to form a general fund of national happiness, from which each individual is to draw his personal share of enjoyment. If the monarch enjoyed the display of his own grace and agility, while he hunted, or rode at the ring, the spectators had their share of pleasure in witnessing it: if Louis had the satisfaction of beholding the splendid piles of Versailles and the Louvre arise at his command, the subject admired them when raised, and his real portion of pleasure was not, perhaps, inferior to that of the founder. The people were like men inconveniently placed in a crowded theatre, who think little of the personal inconveniences they are subjected to by the heat and pressure, while their mind is engrossed by the splendours of the representation. In short, not only the political opinions of Frenchmen, but their actual feelings, were, in the earlier days of the eighteenth century, expressed in the motto which they chose for their national palace—« Earth hath no Nation like the French—no Nation a City like Paris, or a King like Louis. »

The French enjoyed this assumed superiority with the less chance of being undeceived, that they listened not to any voice from other

lands, which pointed out the deficiencies in the frame of government under which they lived, or which hinted the superior privileges enjoyed by the subjects of a more free state. The intense love of our own country, and admiration of its constitution, is usually accompanied with a contempt or dislike of foreign states, and their modes of government. The French, in the reign of Louis XIV., enamoured of their own institutions, regarded those of other nations as unworthy of their consideration; and if they paused for a moment to gaze on the complicated constitution of their great rival, it was soon dismissed as a subject totally unintelligible, with some expression of pity, perhaps, for the poor sovereign who had the ill luck to preside over a government embarrassed by so many restraints and limitations.[1] Yet, into whatever political errors the French people were led by the excess of their loyalty, it would be unjust to brand them as a nation of a mean and slavish spirit. Servitude infers dishonour, and dishonour to a Frenchman is the last of evils. Burke more justly regarded them as a people misled to their disadvantage, by high and romantic ideas of honour and fidelity, and who, actuated by a principle of public

[1] The old French proverb bore,

Le roi d'Angleterre
Est le roi d'Enfer.

spirit in their submission to their monarch, worshipped, in his person, the Fortune of France, their common country.

During the reign of Louis XIV., every thing tended to support the sentiment which connected the national honour with the wars and undertakings of the king. His success, in the earlier years of his reign, was splendid, and he might be regarded, for many years, as the dictator of Europe. During this period, the universal opinion of his talents, together with his successes abroad, and his magnificence at home, fostered the idea that the Grand Monarque was in himself the tutelar deity, and only representative, of the great nation whose powers he wielded. Sorrow and desolation came on his latter years; but be it said, to the honour of the French people, that the devoted allegiance they had paid to Louis in prosperity was not withdrawn when fortune seemed to have turned her back upon her original favourite. France poured her youth forth as readily, if not so gaily, to repair the defeats of her monarch's old age, as she had previously yielded them to secure and extend the victories of his early reign. Louis had perfectly succeeded in establishing the crown as the sole pivot upon which public affairs turned, and in attaching to his person, as the representative of France, all the importance which in other

countries is given to the great body of the nation.

Nor had the spirit of the French monarchy, in surrounding itself with all the dignity of absolute power, failed to secure the support of those auxiliaries which have the most extended influence upon the public mind, by engaging at once religion and literature in defence of its authority. The Gallican Church, more dependent upon the monarch, and less so upon the Pope, than is usual in catholic countries, gave to the power of the crown all the mysterious and supernatural terrors annexed to an origin in divine right, and directed against those who encroached on the limits of the royal prerogative, or even ventured to scrutinize too minutely the foundation of its authority, the penalties annexed to a breach of the divine law. Louis XIV. repaid this important service by a constant, and even scrupulous attention to observances prescribed by the church, which strengthened, in the eyes of the public, the alliance so strictly formed betwixt the altar and the throne. Those who look to the private morals of the monarch may indeed form some doubt of the sincerity of his religious professions, considering how little they influenced his practice; and yet when we reflect upon the frequent inconsistencies of mankind in this particular, we may

hesitate to charge with hypocrisy a conduct, which was dictated perhaps as much by conscience as by political convenience. Even judging more severely, it must be allowed that hypocrisy, though so different from religion, indicates its existence, as smoke points out that of pure fire. Hypocrisy cannot exist unless religion be to a certain extent held in esteem, because no one would be at the trouble to assume a mask which was not respectable, and, so far, compliance with the external forms of religion is a tribute paid to the doctrines which it teaches. The hypocrite assumes a virtue if he has it not, and the example of his conduct may be salutary to others, though his pretensions to piety are wickedness to Him, who trieth the heart and reins.

On the other hand, the Academy formed by the wily Richelieu served to unite the literature of France into one focus, under the immediate patronage of the crown, to whose bounty its professors were taught to look even for the very means of subsistence. The greater nobles caught this ardour of patronage from the sovereign, and as the latter pensioned and supported the principal literary characters of his reign, the former granted shelter and support to others of the same rank, who were lodged at their hotels, fed at their tables, and were admitted to their society upon terms somewhat less degrading

than those which were granted to artists and musicians, and who gave to the great, knowledge or amusement in exchange for the hospitality they received. Men in a situation so subordinate, could only at first accommodate their compositions to the taste and interest of their protectors. They heightened by adulation and flattery the claims of the king and the nobles upon the community; and the nation, indifferent at that time to all literature which was not of native growth, felt their respect for their own government enhanced and extended by the works of those men of genius who flourished under its protection.

Such was the system of French monarchy, and such it remained, in outward show at least, until the Peace of Fontainebleau. But its foundation had been gradually undermined; public opinion had undergone a silent but almost a total change, and it might be compared to some ancient tower swayed from its base by the lapse of time, and waiting the first blast of a hurricane, or shock of an earthquake, to be prostrated in the dust. How the lapse of half a century, or little more, could have produced a change so total, must next be considered; and this can only be done by viewing separately the various changes which the lapse of years had produced on the various orders of the State.

First, then, it is to be observed, that in these

latter times the wasting effects of luxury and vanity had totally ruined a great part of the French nobility, a word which, in respect of that country, comprehended what is called in Britain the nobility and gentry, or natural aristocracy of the kingdom. This body, during the reign of Louis XIV., though far even then from supporting the part which their fathers had acted in history, yet existed, as it were, through their remembrances, and disguised their dependence upon the throne by the outward show of fortune, as well as by the consequence attached to hereditary right. They were one step nearer the days, not then totally forgotten, when the nobles of France, with their retainers, actually formed the army of the kingdom; and they still presented, to the imagination at least, the descendants of a body of chivalrous heroes, ready to tread in the path of their ancestors, should the times ever render necessary the calling forth the Ban, or Arriere-Ban—the feudal array of the Gallic chivalry. But this delusion had passed away; the defence of states was intrusted in France, as in other countries, to the exertions of a standing army; and, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the nobles of France presented a melancholy contrast to their predecessors.

The number of the order was of itself sufficient to diminish its consequence. It had been

imprudently increased by new creations. There were in the kingdom about eighty thousand families enjoying the privileges of nobility; and the order was divided into different classes, which looked on each other with mutual jealousy and contempt.

The first general distinction was betwixt the Ancient, and Modern, or new noblesse. The former were nobles of old creation, whose ancestors had obtained their rank from real or supposed services rendered to the nation in her councils or her battles. The new nobles had found an easier access to the same elevation, by the purchase of territories, or of offices, or of letters of nobility, any of which easy modes invested the owners with titles and rank, often held by men whose wealth had been accumulated in mean and sordid occupations, or by farmers-general, and financiers, whom the people considered as acquiring their fortunes at the expense of the state. These numerous additions to the privileged body of nobles accorded ill with its original composition, and introduced schism and disunion into the body itself. The descendants of the ancient chivalry of France looked with scorn and contempt upon the new men, who, rising perhaps from the very lees of the people, claimed from superior wealth a share in the privileges of the aristocracy.

Again, secondly, there was, amongst the an-

cient nobles themselves, but too ample room for division between the upper and wealthier class of nobility, who had fortunes adequate to maintain their rank, and the much more numerous body, whose poverty rendered them pensioners upon the state for the means of supporting their dignity. Of about one thousand houses, of which the ancient noblesse is computed to have consisted, there were not above two or three hundred families who had retained the means of maintaining their rank without the assistance of the crown. Their claims to monopolize commissions in the army, and situations in the government, together with their exemption from taxes, were their sole resources; resources burthensome to the state, and odious to the people, without being in the same degree beneficial to those who enjoyed them. Even in military service, which was considered as their birthright, the nobility of the second class were seldom permitted to rise above a certain limited rank. Long service might exalt one of them to the *grade* of lieutenant-colonel, or the government of some small town, but all the better rewards of a life spent in the army were reserved for nobles of the highest order. It followed as a matter of course, that amidst so many of this privileged body who languished in poverty, and could not rise from it by the ordinary paths of industry, some must have had recourse to loose and

dishonourable practices; and that gambling-houses and places of debauchery should have been frequented and patronized by individuals, whose ancient descent, titles, and emblems of nobility, did not save them from the suspicion of very dishonourable conduct, the disgrace of which affected the character of the whole body.

There must be noticed a third classification of the order, into the Haute Noblesse, or men of the highest rank, most of whom spent their lives at court, and in discharge of the great offices of the crown and state, and the Noblesse Campagnarde, who continued to reside upon their patrimonial estates in the provinces.

The noblesse of the latter class had fallen gradually into a state of general contempt, which was deeply to be regretted. They were ridiculed and scorned by the courtiers, who despised the rusticity of their manners, and by the nobles of newer creation, who, conscious of their own wealth, contemned the poverty of these ancient but decayed families. The « bold peasant» himself, is not more a kingdom's pride than is the plain country gentleman, who, living on his own means, and amongst his own people, becomes the natural protector and referee of the farmer and the peasant, and in case of need, either the firmest assertor of their rights and his own against the aggressions of the crown, or the independent

and undaunted defender of the crown's rights, against the innovations of political fanaticism. In La Vendée alone, the nobles had united their interest and their fortune with those of the peasants who cultivated their estates, and there alone were they found in their proper and honourable character of proprietors residing on their own domains, and discharging the duties which are inalienably attached to the owner of landed property. And—mark-worthy circumstance!—in La Vendée alone was any stand made in behalf of the ancient proprietors, constitution, or religion of France; for there alone the nobles and the cultivators of the soil held towards each other their natural and proper relations of patron and client, faithful dependents, and generous and affectionate superiors. In the other provinces of France, the nobility, speaking generally, possessed neither power nor influence among the peasantry, while the population around them was guided and influenced by men belonging to the church, to the law, or to business; classes which were in general better educated, better informed, and possessed of more talent and knowledge of the world, than the poor Noblesse Campagnarde, who seemed as much limited, caged, and imprisoned, within the restraints of their rank, as if they had been shut up within the dungeons of their ruinous chateaux; and who had only their titles and

dusty parchments to oppose to the real superiority of wealth and information so generally to be found in the class which they affected to despise. Hence, Ségur describes the country gentlemen of his younger days as punctilious, ignorant, and quarrelsome, shunned by the better informed of the middle classes, idle and dissipated, and wasting their leisure hours in coffee-houses, theatres, and billiard-rooms.

The more wealthy families, and the high noblesse, as they were called, saw this degradation of the inferior part of their order without pity, or rather with pleasure. These last had risen as much above their natural duties, as the rural nobility had sunk beneath them. They had too well followed the course which Richelieu had contrived to recommend to their fathers, and, instead of acting as the natural chiefs and leaders of the nobility and gentry of the provinces, they were continually engaged in intriguing for charges round the king's person, for posts in the administration, for additional titles and decorations—for all and every thing which could make the successful courtier, and distinguish him from the independent noble. Their education and habits also were totally unfavourable to grave or serious thought and exertion. If the trumpet had sounded, it would have found a ready echo in their bosoms; but light literature at best, and much more frequently silly and fri-

volous amusements, a constant pursuit of pleasure, and a perpetual succession of intrigues, either of love or petty politics, made their character, in time of peace, approach in insignificance to that of the women of the court, whom it was the business of their lives to captivate and amuse.[1] There were noble exceptions, but in general the order, in every thing but military courage, had assumed a trivial and effeminate character, from which patriotic sacrifices, or masculine wisdom, were scarcely to be expected.

While the nobles of France were engaged in these frivolous pursuits, their procureurs, bailiffs, stewards, intendants, or by whatsoever name their agents and managers were designated, enjoyed the real influence which their constituents rejected as beneath them, rose into a degree of authority and credit, which eclipsed recollection of the distant and regardless proprietor, and formed a rank in the state not very different from that of the middle-men in Ireland.[2] These agents were necessarily of

[1] See, for a curious picture of the life of the French nobles of fifty years since, the first volume of Madame de Genlis' Memoirs. Had there been any more solid pursuits in society than the gay trifles she so pleasantly describes, they could not have escaped so intelligent an observer.

[2] A class of persons in Ireland who have obtained the name of Middlemen from their holding an interest in lands between the proprietor and the terre-tenant. Ed.

plebeian birth, and their profession required that they should be familiar with the details of public business, which they administered in the name of their seigneurs. Many of this condition gained power and wealth in the course of the Revolution, thus succeeding, like an able and intelligent vizier, to the power which was forfeited by the idle and voluptuous sultan. Of the high noblesse it might with truth be said, that they still formed the grace of the court of France, though they had ceased to be its defence. They were accomplished, brave, full of honour, and in many instances endowed with talent. But the communication was broken off betwixt them and the subordinate orders, over whom, in just degree, they ought to have possessed a natural influence. The chain of gradual and insensible connexion was rusted by time, in almost all its dependencies; forcibly distorted, and contemptuously wrenched asunder, in many, The noble had neglected and flung from him the most precious jewel in his coronet—the love and respect of the country gentleman, the farmer, and the peasant, an advantage so natural to his condition in a well-constituted society, and founded upon principles so estimable, that he who contemns or destroys it is guilty of little less than high treason, both to his own rank, and to the community in general. Such a change, however, had taken place in France,

so that the noblesse might be compared to a court-sword, the hilt carved, ornamented, and gilded, such as might grace a day of parade, but the blade gone, or composed of the most worthless materials.

It only remains to be mentioned, that there subsisted, besides all the distinctions we have noticed, an essential difference in political opinions among the noblesse themselves considered as a body. There were many of the order, who, looking to the exigencies of the kingdom, were patriotically disposed to sacrifice their own exclusive privileges, in order to afford a chance of its regeneration. These of course were disposed to favour an alteration or reform in the original constitution of France; but besides these enlightened individuals, the nobility had the misfortune to include many disappointed and desperate men, ungratified by any of the advantages which their rank made them capable of receiving, and whose advantages of birth and education only rendered them more deeply dangerous, or more daringly profligate. A plebeian, dishonoured by his vices, or depressed by the poverty which is their consequence, sinks easily into the insignificance from which wealth or character alone raised him; but the noble often retains the means, as well as the desire, to avenge himself on society, for an expulsion which he feels not the less because he is conscious of deserv-

ing it. Such were the debauched Roman youth, among whom were found Catiline, and associates equal in talents and in depravity to their leader; and such was the celebrated Mirabeau, who, almost expelled from his own class, as an irreclaimable profligate, entered the arena of the Revolution as a first-rate reformer, and a popular advocate of the lower orders.

The state of the Church, that second pillar of the throne, was scarce more solid than that of the Nobility. Generally speaking, it might be said, that, for a long time, the higher orders of the clergy had ceased to take a vital concern in their profession, or to exercise its functions in a manner which interested the feelings and affections of men.

The Catholic Church had grown old, and unfortunately did not possess the means of renovating her doctrines, or improving her constitution, so as to keep pace with the enlargement of the human understanding. The lofty claims of infallibility which she had set up and maintained during the Middle Ages, claims which she could neither renounce nor modify, now threatened, in more enlightened times, like battlements too heavy for the foundation, to be the means of ruining the edifice they were designed to defend. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*, continued to be the motto of the Church of Rome. She could explain nothing,

soften nothing, renounce nothing, consistently with her assertion of impeccability. The whole trash which had been accumulated for ages of darkness and ignorance, whether consisting of extravagant pretensions, incredible assertions, absurd doctrines which confounded the understanding, or puerile ceremonies which revolted the taste, were alike incapable of being explained away or abandoned. It would certainly have been (humanly speaking) advantageous, alike for the Church of Rome, and for christianity in general, that the former had possessed the means of relinquishing her extravagant claims, modifying her more obnoxious doctrines, and retrenching her superstitious ceremonial, as increasing knowledge showed the injustice of the one, and the absurdity of the other. But this power she dared not assume; and hence, perhaps, the great schism which divides the christian world, which might otherwise never have existed, or at least not in its present extended and embittered state. But, in all events, the Church of Rome, retaining the spiritual empire over so large and fair a portion of the christian world, would not have been reduced to the alternative of either defending propositions, which, in the eyes of all enlightened men, are altogether untenable, or of beholding the most essential and vital doctrines of christianity confounded with them, and the whole system

exposed to the scorn of the infidel. The more enlightened and better informed part of the French nation had fallen very generally into the latter extreme.

Infidelity, in attacking the absurd claims and extravagant doctrines of the Church of Rome, had artfully availed herself of those abuses, as if they had been really a part of the christian religion; and they, whose credulity could not digest the grossest articles of the papist creed, thought themselves entitled to conclude, in general, against religion itself, from the abuses engrafted upon it by ignorance and priestcraft. The same circumstances which favoured the assault, tended to weaken the defence. Embarrassed by the necessity of defending the mass of human inventions with which their Church had obscured and deformed christianity, the catholic clergy were not the best advocates even in the best of causes; and though there were many brilliant exceptions, yet it must be owned that a great part of the higher orders of the priesthood gave themselves little trouble about maintaining the doctrines, or extending the influence of the Church, considering it only in the light of an asylum, where, under the condition of certain renunciations, they enjoyed, in indolent tranquillity, a state of ease and luxury. Those who thought on the subject more deeply were contented quietly to repose the safety of the Church upon

the restrictions on the press, which prevented the possibility of free discussion. The usual effect followed ; and many who, if manly and open debate upon theological subjects had been allowed, would doubtless have been enabled to winnow the wheat from the chaff, were, in the state of darkness to which they were reduced, led to reject christianity itself, along with the corruptions of the Romish Church, and to become absolute infidels, instead of reformed christians.

The long and violent dispute also, betwixt the Jesuits and the Jansenists, had for many years tended to lessen the general consideration for the Church at large, and especially for the higher orders of the clergy. In that quarrel, much had taken place that was disgraceful. The mask of religion has been often used to cover more savage and extensive persecutions, but at no time did the spirit of intrigue, of personal malice, of slander and circumvention, appear more disgustingly from under the sacred disguise ; and in the eyes of the thoughtless and the vulgar, the general cause of religion suffered in proportion.

The number of the clergy who were thus indifferent to doctrine or duty was greatly increased, since the promotion to the great benefices had ceased to be distributed with regard to the morals, piety, talents, and erudition of the candidates, but was bestowed

among the younger branches of the noblesse, upon men who were at little pains to reconcile the looseness of their former habits and opinions with the sanctity of their new profession, and who, embracing the Church solely as a means of maintenance, were little calculated by their lives or learning to extend its consideration. Among other vile innovations of the celebrated regent Duke of Orleans, he set the most barefaced example of such dishonourable preferment, and had increased in proportion the contempt entertained for the hierarchy, even in its highest dignities, since how was it possible to respect the purple itself, after it had covered the shoulders of the infamous Dubois?

It might have been expected, and it was doubtless in a great measure the case, that the respect paid to the characters and efficient utility of the curates, upon whom, generally speaking, the charge of souls actually devolved, might have made up for the want of consideration withheld from the higher orders of the Church. There can be no doubt that this respectable body of churchmen possessed great and deserved influence over their parishioners; but then they were themselves languishing under poverty and neglect, and, as human beings, cannot be supposed to have viewed with indifference their superiors enjoying wealth and ease, while in some cases

they dishonoured the robe they wore, and in others disowned the doctrines they were appointed to teach. Alive to feelings so natural, and mingling with the middling classes, of which they formed a most respectable portion, they must necessarily have become embued with their principles and opinions, and a very obvious train of reasoning would extend the consequences to their own condition. If the state was encumbered rather than benefited by the privileges of the higher order, was not the Church in the same condition? And if secular rank was to be thrown open as a general object of ambition to the able and the worthy, ought not the dignities of the Church to be rendered more accessible to those, who, in humility and truth, discharged the toilsome duties of its inferior offices, and who might therefore claim, in due degree of succession, to attain higher preferment? There can be no injustice in ascribing to this body sentiments, which might have been no less just regarding the Church than advantageous to themselves; and, accordingly, it was not long before this body of churchmen showed distinctly, that their political views were the same with those of the Third Estate, to which they solemnly united themselves, strengthening thereby greatly the first revolutionary movements. But their conduct, when they beheld the whole system of their religion aim-

ed at, should acquit the French clergy of the charge of self-interest, since no body, considered as such, ever showed itself more willing to encounter persecution, and submit to privation for conscience' sake.

While the Noblesse and the Church, considered as branches of the state, were thus divided amongst themselves, and fallen into discredit with the nation at large; while they were envied for their ancient immunities, without being any longer feared for their power; while they were ridiculed at once and hated for the assumption of a superiority which their personal qualities did not always vindicate, the lowest order, the Commons, or, as they were at that time termed, the Third Estate, had gradually acquired an extent and importance unknown to the feudal ages, in which originated the ancient division of the estates of the kingdom. The Third Estate no longer, as in the days of Henry IV., consisted merely of the burghers and petty traders in the small towns of a feudal kingdom, bred up almost as the vassals of the nobles and clergy, by whose expenditure they acquired their living. Commerce and colonies had introduced wealth, from sources to which the nobles and the churchmen had no access. Not only a very great proportion of the disposable capital was in the hands of the Third Estate, who thus formed the bulk of the moneyed interest of

France, but a large share of the landed property was also in their possession.

There was, moreover, the influence which many plebeians possessed, as creditors, over those needy nobles whom they had supplied with money, while another portion of the same class rose into wealth and consideration, at the expense of the more opulent patricians who were ruining themselves. Paris had increased to a tremendous extent, and her citizens had risen to a corresponding degree of consideration; and, while they profited by the luxury and dissipation both of the court and courtiers, had become rich in proportion as the government and privileged classes grew poor. Those citizens who were thus enriched, endeavoured, by bestowing on their families all the advantages of good education, to counterbalance their inferiority of birth, and to qualify their children to support their part in the scenes to which their altered fortunes, and the prospects of the country, appeared to call them. In short, it is not too much to say, that the middling classes acquired the advantages of wealth, consequence, and effective power, in a proportion more than equal to that in which the nobility had lost these attributes. Thus, the Third Estate seemed to increase in extent, number, and strength, like a waxing inundation, threatening with every increasing wave to overwhelm the ancient and

decayed barriers of exclusions and immunities, behind which the privileged ranks still fortified themselves.

It was not in the nature of man, that the bold, the talented, the ambitious, of a rank which felt its own power and consequence, should be long contented to remain acquiescent in political regulations, which depressed them in the state of society beneath men to whom they felt themselves equal in all respects, excepting the factitious circumstances of birth or of church orders. It was no less impossible that they should long continue satisfied with the feudal dogma, which exempted the noblesse from taxes, because they served the nation with their sword, and the clergy, because they propitiated Heaven in its favour with their prayers. The maxim, however true in the feudal ages when it originated, had become an extravagant legal fiction in the eighteenth century, when all the world knew that both the noble soldier and the priest were paid for the services they no longer rendered to the state, while the *roturier* had both valour and learning to fight his own battles and perform his own devotions; and when, in fact, it was their arms which combated, and their learning which enlightened the state, rather than those of the privileged orders.

Thus, a body, opulent and important, and carrying along with their claims the sympathy

of the whole people, were arranged in formidable array against the privileges of the nobles and clergy, and bound to further the approaching changes by the strongest of human ties, emulation and self-interest.

The point was stated with unusual frankness by Emery, a distinguished member of the National Assembly, and a man of honour and talent. In the course of a confidential communication with the celebrated Marquis de Bouillé, the latter had avowed his principles of royalty, and his detestation of the new constitution, to which he said he only rendered obedience because the King had sworn to maintain it. « You are right, being yourself a nobleman, » replied Emery, with equal candour; « and, had I been born noble, such would have been my principles; but I, a plebeian *avocat*, will adhere to that constitution which has called me, and those of my rank, out of the state of incapacity and degradation in which the Revolution found us. »

Considering the situation, therefore, of the three separate bodies, which, before the revolutionary impulse commenced, were the constituent parts of the kingdom of France, it was evident, that in case of a collision, the Nobles and Clergy might esteem themselves fortunate, if, divided as they were among themselves, they could maintain an effectual defence of the whole or a portion of their privileges,

while the Third Estate, confident in their numbers and in their unanimity, were ready to assail and carry by storm the whole system, over the least breach which might be effected in the ancient constitution. Lally Tolendal gave a comprehensive view of the state of parties in these words:—« The Commons desired to conquer, the Nobles to preserve what they already possessed. The Clergy stood inactive, resolved to join the victorious party. If there was a man in France who wished for concord and peace, it was the King.»

CHAPTER II.

State of France continued.—State of Public Opinion.—Men of Letters encouraged by the Great.—Disadvantages attending this Patronage.—Licentious tendency of the French Literature—Their Irreligious and Infidel Opinions.—Free Opinions on Politics permitted to be expressed in an abstract and speculative, but not in a practical Form.—Disadvantages arising from the Suppression of Free Discussion.—Anglomania.—Share of France in the American War.—Disposition of the Troops who returned from America.

We have viewed France as it stood in its grand political divisions previous to the Revolution, and we have seen that there existed strong motives for change, and that a great force was prepared to level institutions which were crumbling to pieces of themselves. It is now necessary to review the state of the popular mind, and consider upon what principles, and to what extent, the approaching changes were likely to operate, and at what point they might be expected to stop. Here, as with respect to the ranks of society, a tacit but almost total change had been operated in the feelings and sentiments of the public, principally occasioned, doubtless, by the great ascendancy ac-

quired by literature—that tree of knowledge of good and evil, which, amidst the richest and most wholesome fruit, bears others, fair in show, and sweet to the taste, but having the properties of the most deadly poison.

The French, the most ingenious people in Europe, and the most susceptible of those pleasures which arise from conversation and literary discussion, had early called in the assistance of men of genius to enhance their relish for society. The nobles, without renouncing their aristocratic superiority,—which, on the contrary, was rendered more striking by the contrast,—permitted literary talents to be a passport into their saloons. The wealthy financier, and opulent merchant, emulated the nobility in this as in other articles of taste and splendour; and their coteries, as well as those of the aristocracy, were open to men of letters, who were in many cases contented to enjoy luxury at the expense of independence. Assuredly this species of patronage, while it often flowed from the vanity or egotism of the patrons, was not much calculated to enhance the character of those who were protected. Professors ot literature, thus mingling in the society of the noble and the wealthy upon sufferance, held a rank scarce more high than that of musicians or actors, from amongst whom individuals have often, by their talents and character, become members of the best

society, while the castes, to which such individuals belong, remain in general exposed to the most humiliating contempt. The lady of quality, who smiled on the man of letters, and the man of rank, who admitted him to his intimacy, still retained their consciousness that he was not, like themselves, formed out of the « porcelain clay of the earth,» and even while receiving their bounties, or participating in their pleasures, the favourite *savant* must often have been disturbed by the reflection, that he was only considered as a creature of sufferance, whom the caprice of faction, or a sudden reaction of the ancient etiquette, might fling out of the society where he was at present tolerated. Under this disheartening, and even degrading inferiority, the man of letters might be tempted invidiously to compare the luxurious style of living at which he sat a permitted guest, with his own paltry hired apartment, and scanty and uncertain chance of support. And even those of a nobler mood, when they had conceded to their benefactors all the gratitude they could justly demand, must sometimes have regretted their own situation,

> Condemn'd as needy supplicants to wait,
> While ladies interpose and slaves debate.

It followed, that many of the men of letters, thus protected, became enemies of the persons as well as the rank of their patrons; as, for ex-

ample, no one in the course of the Revolution expressed greater hatred to the nobility than Champfort, the favourite and favoured secretary of the Prince of Condé. Occasions, too, must frequently have occurred, in which the protected person was almost inevitably forced upon comparing his own natural and acquired talents with those of his aristocratic patron, and the result could not be other than a dislike of the institutions which placed him so far behind persons whom, but for those prescribed limits, he must have passed in the career of honour and distinction.

Hence arose that frequent and close inquiry into the origin of ranks, that general system of impugning the existing regulations, and appealing to the original states of society in vindication of the original equality of mankind—hence those ingenious arguments and eloquent tirades in favour of primitive and even savage independence, which the patricians of the day read and applauded with such a smile of mixed applause and pity, as they would have given to the reveries of a crazed poet, while the inferior ranks, participating the feelings under which they were written, caught the ardour of the eloquent authors, and rose from the perusal with minds prepared to act, whenever action should be necessary to realize a vision so flattering.

It might have been expected that those be-

longing to the privileged classes, at least, would have caught the alarm, from hearing doctrines so fatal to their own interests avowed so boldly, and maintained with so much talent. It might have been thought that they would have started, when Raynal proclaimed to the nations of the earth that they could only be free and happy when they had overthrown every throne and every altar; but no such alarm was taken. Men of rank considered liberal principles as the fashion of the day, and embraced them as the readiest mode of showing that they were above vulgar prejudices. In short, they adopted political opinions, as they put on round hats and jockey coats, merely because they were current in good society. They assumed the tone of philosophers, as they would have done that of Arcadian shepherds at a masquerade, but without any more thoughts of sacrificing their own rank and immunities in the one case, than of actually driving their flocks a-field in the other. Count Ségur gives a most interesting account of the opinions of the young French nobles, in which he himself partook at this eventful period.

« Impeded in this light career by the antiquated pride of the old court, the irksome etiquette of the old order of things, the severity of the old clergy, the aversion of our parents to our new fashions and our costumes, which were favourable to the principles of equality,

we felt disposed to adopt with enthusiasm the philosophical doctrines professed by literary men, remarkable for their boldness and their wit. Voltaire seduced our imagination; Rousseau touched our hearts; we felt a secret pleasure in seeing that their attacks were directed against an old fabric, which presented to us a Gothic and ridiculous appearance.

« We were thus pleased at this petty war, although it was undermining our own ranks and privileges, and the remains of our ancient power; but we felt not these attacks personally; we merely witnessed them. It was as yet but a war of words and paper, which did not appear to us to threaten the superiority of existence we enjoyed, consolidated, as we thought it, by a possession of many centuries.

* * * *

« We were pleased with the courage of liberty, whatever language it assumed, and with the convenience of equality. There is a satisfaction in descending from a high rank, as long as the resumption of it is thought to be free and unobstructed; and regardless, therefore, of consequences, we enjoyed our patrician advantages, together with the sweets of a plebeian philosophy.» [1]

We anxiously desire not to be mistaken. It

[1] Mémoires et Souvenirs de M. de Ségur, tom. I. pag. 44. Ed.

is not the purport of these remarks to blame the French aristocracy for extending their patronage to learning and to genius. The purpose was honourable to themselves, and fraught with high advantages to the progress of society. The favour of the great supplied the want of public encouragement, and fostered talent which otherwise might never have produced its important and inappreciable fruits. But it had been better for France, her nobility, and her literature, had the patronage been extended in some manner which did not intimately associate the two classes of men. The want of independence of circumstances is a severe if not an absolute check to independence of spirit; and thus it often happened, that, to gratify the passions of their protectors, or to advance their interest, the men of letters were involved in the worst and most scandalous labyrinths of *tracasserie*, slander, and malignity; that they were divided into desperate factions against each other, and reduced to practise all those arts of dissimulation, flattery, and intrigue, which are the greatest shame of the literary profession.

As the eighteenth century advanced, the men of literature rose in importance, and, aware of their own increasing power in a society which was dependent on them for intellectual gratification, they supported each other in their claims to what began to be considered

the dignity of a man of letters. This was soon carried into extremes, and assumed, even in the halls of their protectors, a fanatical violence of opinion, and a dogmatical mode of expression, which made the veteran Fontenelle declare himself terrified for the frightful degree of *certainty* that folks met with every where in society. The truth is, that men of letters, being usually men of mere theory, have no opportunity of measuring the opinions which they have adopted upon hypothetical reasoning, by the standard of practical experiment. They feel their mental superiority to those whom they live with, and become habitual believers in, and assertors of, their own infallibility. If moderation, command of passions and of temper, be part of philosophy, we seldom find less philosophy actually displayed, than by a philosopher in defence of a favourite theory. Nor have we found that churchmen are so desirous of forming proselytes, or soldiers of extending conquests, as philosophers in making converts to their own opinions.

In France they had discovered the command which they had acquired over the public mind, and united as they were (and more especially the Encyclopedists), they augmented and secured that impression, by never permitting the doctrines which they wished to propagate to die away upon the public ear. For this

purpose, they took care their doctrines should be echoed, like thunder amongst hills, from a hundred different points, presented in a hundred new lights, illustrated by a hundred various methods, until the public could no longer help receiving that as undeniable which they heard from so many different quarters. They could also direct every weapon of satirical hostility against those who ventured to combat their doctrines, and as their wrath was neither easily endured nor pacified, they drove from the field most of those authors, who, in opposition to their opinions, might have exerted themselves as champions of the church and monarchy.

We have already hinted at the disadvantages under which literature labours, when it is under the protection of private individuals of opulence, rather than of the public. But in yet another important respect, the air of *salons*, *ruelles*, and *boudoirs*, is fatal, in many cases, to the masculine spirit of philosophical self-denial which gives dignity to literary society. They who make part of the gay society of a corrupted metropolis must lend their countenance to follies and vices, if they do not themselves practise them; and hence, perhaps, French literature, more than any other in Europe, has been liable to the reproach of lending its powerful arm to undermine whatever was serious in morals, or hitherto consi-

dered as fixed in principle. Some of their greatest authors, even Montesquieu himself, have varied their deep reasonings on the origin of government, and the most profound problems of philosophy, with licentious tales tending to inflame the passions. Hence, partaking of the license of its professors, the degraded literature of modern times called in to its alliance that immorality, which not only christian, but even heathen philosophy had considered as the greatest obstacle to a pure, wise, and happy state of existence. The licentiousness which walked abroad in such disgusting and undisguised nakedness was a part of the unhappy bequest left by the regent Duke of Orleans to the country which he governed. The decorum of the court during the times of Louis XIV. had prevented such excesses; if there was enough of vice, it was at least decently veiled. But the conduct of Orleans and his minions was marked with open infamy, deep enough to have called down, in the age of miracles, an immediate judgment from Heaven; and crimes which the worst of the Roman emperors would have at least hidden in his solitary Isle of Caprea, were acted as publicly as if men had no eyes, or God no thunderbolts.

From this filthy Cocytus flowed those streams of impurity which disgraced France during the reign of Louis XV., and which, notwith-

standing the example of a prince who was himself a model of domestic virtue, continued in that of Louis XVI. to infect society, morals, and, above all, literature. We do not here allude merely to those lighter pieces of indecency in which humour and fancy outrun the bounds of delicacy. These are to be found in the literature of most nations, and are generally in the hands of mere libertines and men of pleasure, so well acquainted with the practice of vice, that the theory cannot make them worse than they are. But there was a strain of voluptuous and seducing immorality which pervaded not only the lighter and gayer compositions of the French, but tinged the writings of those who called the world to admire them as poets of the highest mood, or to listen as to philosophers of the most lofty pretensions. Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu—names which France must always esteem her highest honour—were so guilty in this particular, that the young and virtuous must either altogether abstain from works which are every where the topic of ordinary discussion and admiration, or must peruse much that is hurtful to delicacy and dangerous to morals, in the formation of their future character. The latter alternative was universally adopted; for the curious will read as the thirsty will drink, though the cup and page be polluted.

So far had an indifference to delicacy influenced the society of France, and so widely spread was this habitual impurity of language and ideas, especially among those who pretended to philosophy, that Madame Roland, a woman admirable for courage and talents, and not, so far as appears, vicious in her private morals, not only mentions the profligate novels of Louvet as replete with the graces of imagination, the salt of criticism, and the tone of philosophy, but affords the public, in her own person, details with which a courtezan of the higher class should be unwilling to season her private conversation.[1]

This license, with the corruption of morals, of which it is both the sign and the cause, leads directly to feelings the most inconsistent with manly and virtuous patriotism. Voluptuousness, and its consequences, render the libertine incapable of relish for what is simply and abstractedly beautiful or sublime, whether in literature or in the arts, and destroy the taste, while they degrade and blunt the understanding. But, above all, such libertinism

[1] The particulars we allude to, though suppressed in the second edition of Madame Roland's Mémoires, are restored in the collection of Mémoires respecting the Revolution, now publishing at Paris. This is fair play; for if the details be disgusting, the light which they cast upon the character of the author is too valuable to be lost.

leads to the exclusive pursuit of selfish gratification, for egotism is its foundation and its essence. Egotism is necessarily the very reverse of patriotism, since the one principle is founded exclusively upon the individual's pursuit of his own peculiar objects of pleasure or advantage, while the other demands a sacrifice, not only of these individual pursuits, but of fortune and life itself, to the cause of the public weal. Patriotism has, accordingly, always been found to flourish in that state of society which is most favourable to the stern and manly virtues of self-denial, temperance, chastity, contempt of luxury, patient exertion, and elevated contemplation; and the public spirit of a nation has invariably borne a just proportion to its private morals.

Religion cannot exist where immorality generally prevails, any more than a light can burn where the air is corrupted; and, accordingly, infidelity was so general in France, as to predominate in almost every rank of society. The errors of the Church of Rome, as we have already noticed, connected as they are with her ambitious attempts towards dominion over men, in their temporal as well as spiritual capacity, had long become the argument of the philosopher, and the jest of the satirist; but in exploding these pretensions, and holding them up to ridicule, the philosophers of the age involved with them the general doctrines

of christianity itself; nay, some went so far as not only to deny inspiration, but to extinguish, by their sophistry, the lights of natural religion, implanted in our bosoms as a part of our birthright. Like the disorderly rabble at the time of the Reformation (but with infinitely deeper guilt), they not only pulled down the symbols of idolatry, which ignorance or priestcraft had introduced into the Christian Church, but sacrilegiously defaced and desecrated the altar itself. This work the philosophers, as they termed themselves, carried on with such an unlimited and eager zeal, as plainly to show that infidelity, as well as divinity, hath its fanaticism. An envenomed fury against religion and all its doctrines; a promptitude to avail themselves of every circumstance by which christianity could be misrepresented; an ingenuity in mixing up their opinions in works, which seemed the least fitting to involve such discussions; above all, a pertinacity in slandering, ridiculing, and vilifying all who ventured to oppose their principles, distinguished the correspondents in this celebrated conspiracy against a religion, which, however it may be defaced by human inventions, breathes only that peace on earth, and good-will to the children of men, which was proclaimed by Heaven at its divine origin.

If these prejudiced and envenomed opponents had possessed half the desire of truth,

or half the benevolence towards mankind, which were eternally on their lips, they would have formed the true estimate of the spirit of christianity; not from the use which had been made of the mere name by ambitious priests or enthusiastic fools, but by its vital effects upon mankind at large. They would have seen, that under its influence a thousand brutal and sanguinary superstitions had died away; that polygamy had been abolished, and with polygamy all the obstacles which it offers to domestic happiness, as well as to the due education of youth, and the natural and gradual civilization of society. They must then have owned, that slavery, which they regarded or affected to regard with such horror, had first been gradually ameliorated, and finally abolished by the influence of the christian doctrines—that there was no one virtue teaching to elevate mankind or benefit society, which was not enjoined by the precepts they endeavoured to misrepresent and weaken—no one vice by which humanity is degraded and society endangered, upon which christianity hath not imposed a solemn anathema. They might also, in their capacity of philosophers, have considered the peculiar aptitude of the christian religion, not only to all ranks and conditions of mankind, but to all climates and to all stages of society. Nor ought it to have escaped them, that the system contains within

itself a key to those difficulties, doubts, and mysteries, by which the human mind is agitated, so soon as it is raised beyond the mere objects which interest the senses. Milton has made the maze of metaphysics, and the bewildering state of mind which they engender, a part of the employment, and perhaps of the punishment, of the lower regions. Christianity alone offers a clew to this labyrinth, a solution to these melancholy and discouraging doubts; and however its doctrines may be hard to unaided flesh and blood, yet explaining as they do the system of the universe, which without them is so incomprehensible, and through their practical influence rendering men in all ages more worthy to act their part in the general plan, it seems wonderful how those, whose professed pursuit was wisdom, should have looked on religion not alone with that indifference, which was the only feeling evinced by the heathen philosophers towards the gross mythology of their time, but with hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. One would rather have expected, that after such a review, men professing the real spirit which searches after truth and wisdom, if unhappily they were still unable to persuade themselves that a religion so worthy of the Deity (if such an expression may by used) had emanated directly from revelation, might have had the modesty to lay their finger on their

lip, and distrust their own judgment, instead of disturbing the faith of others; or, if confirmed in their incredulity, might have taken the leisure to compute at least what was to be gained by rooting up a tree which bore such goodly fruits, without having the means of replacing it by aught which could produce the same advantage to the commonwealth.

Unhappily blinded by self-conceit, heated with the ardour of controversy, gratifying their literary pride by becoming members of a league, in which kings and princes were included, and procuring followers by flattering the vanity of some, and stimulating the cupidity of others, the men of the most distinguished parts in France became allied in a sort of anticrusade against christianity, and indeed against religious principles of every kind. How they succeeded is too universally known; and when it is considered that these men of letters, who ended by degrading the morals, and destroying the religion of so many of the citizens of France, had been first called into public estimation by the patronage of the higher orders, it is impossible not to think of the Israelitish champion, who, brought into the house of Dagon to make sport for the festive assembly, ended by pulling it down upon the heads of the guests— and upon his own.

We do not tax the whole nation of France

with being infirm in religious faith, and relaxed in morals; still less do we aver that the Revolution, which broke forth in that country, owed its rise exclusively to the license and infidelity which were but too current there. The necessity of a great change in the principles of the ancient French monarchy had its source in the usurpations of preceding kings over the liberties of the subject, and the opportunity for effecting this change was afforded by the weakness and pecuniary distresses of the present government. These would have existed had the French court, and her higher orders, retained the simple and virtuous manners of Sparta, united with the strong and pure faith of primitive christians. The difference lay in this, that a simple, virtuous, and religious people would have rested content with such changes and alterations in the constitution of their government, as might remove the evils of which they had just and pressing reason to complain. They would have endeavoured to redress obvious and practical errors in the body politic, without being led into extremes either by the love of realizing visionary theories, the vanity of enforcing their own particular philosophical or political doctrines, or the selfish arguments of demagogues, who, in the prospect of bettering their own situation by wealth, or obtaining scope for their ambition, aspired, in

the words of the dramatic poet, to throw the elements of society into confusion, and thus

> ——disturb the peace of all the world,
> To rule it when 't was wildest.

It was to such men as these last that Heaven, in punishment of the sins of France and of Europe, and perhaps to teach mankind a dreadful lesson, abandoned the management of the French Revolution, the original movements of which, so far as they went to secure to the people the restoration of their natural liberty, and the abolition of the usurpations of the crown, had become not only desirable through the change of times, and by the influence of public opinion, but peremptorily necessary and inevitable.

The feudal system of France, like that of the rest of Europe, had, in its original composition, all the germs of national freedom. The great peers, in whose hands the common defence was reposed, acknowledged the king's power as *suzerain*, obeyed his commands as their military leader, and attended his courts as their supreme judge; but recognized no despotic authority in the crown, and were prompt to defend the slightest encroachment upon their own rights. If they themselves were not equally tender of the rights and liberties of their own vassals, their acts of encroachment flowed not from the feudal system, but from

its imperfections. The tendency and spirit of these singular institutions were to preserve to each individual his just and natural rights; but a system, almost purely military, was liable to be frequently abused by the most formidable soldier, and was, besides, otherwise ill fitted to preserve rights which were purely civil. It is not necessary to trace the progress from the days of Louis XIII. downwards, by which ambitious monarchs, seconded by able and subtle ministers, contrived to emancipate themselves from the restraints of their powerful vassals, or by which the descendants of these high feudatories, who had been the controllers of the prince so soon as he outstepped the bounds of legitimate authority, were now ranked around the throne in the capacity of mere courtiers or satellites, who derived their lustre solely from the favour of royalty. This unhappy and short-sighted policy had, however, accomplished its end, and the crown had concentred within its prerogative almost the entire liberties of the French nation; and now, like an overgorged animal of prey, had reason to repent its fatal voracity, while it lay almost helpless, exposed to the assaults of those whom it had despoiled.

We have already observed, that for a considerable time the Frenchman's love of his country had been transferred to the crown; that his national delight in martial glory fixed

his attachment upon the monarch as the leader of his armies; and that this feeling had supported the devotion of the nation to Louis XIV., not only during his victories, but even amid his reverses. But the succeeding reign had less to impose on the imagination. The erection of a palace obtains for the nation the praise of magnificence, and the celebration of public and splendid festivals gives the people at least the pleasure of a holiday; the pensioning artists and men of letters, again, is honourable to the country which fosters the arts; but the court of Louis XV., undiminished in expense, was also selfish in its expenditure. The enriching of needy favourites, their relations, and their parasites, had none of the dazzling munificence of the Grand Monarque; and while the taxes became daily more oppressive on the subjects, the mode in which the revenue was employed not only became less honourable to the court, and less creditable to the country, but lost the dazzle and show which gives the lower orders pleasure as the beholders of a pageant.

The consolation which the imagination of the French had found in the military honour of their nation, seemed also about to fail them. The bravery of the troops remained the same, but the genius of the commanders, and the fortune of the monarch under whose auspices they fought, had in a great measure abandoned them, and the destiny of France seemed to be

on the wane. The victory of Fontenoy was all that was to be placed in opposition to the numerous disasters of the Seven Years' War, in which France was almost every where else defeated; and it was little wonder, that, in a reign attended with so many subjects of mortification, the enthusiastic devotion of the people to the sovereign should begin to give way. The King had engrossed so much power in his own person, that he had become as it were personally responsible for every miscarriage and defeat which the country underwent. Such is the risk incurred by absolute monarchs, who are exposed to all the popular obloquy for mal-administration, from which, in limited governments, kings are in a great measure screened by the intervention of the other powers of the constitution, or by the responsibility of ministers for the measures which they advise; while he that has ascended to the actual peak and extreme summit of power, has no barrier left to secure him from the tempest.

Another and most powerful cause fanned the rising discontent, with which the French of the eighteenth century began to regard the government under which they lived. Like men awakened from a flattering dream, they compared their own condition with that of the subjects of free states, and perceived that they had either never enjoyed, or had been gradually robbed of, the chief part of the most

valuable privileges and immunities to which man may claim a natural right. They had no national representation of any kind, and but for the slender barrier offered by the courts of justice, or parliaments, as they were called, were subject to unlimited exactions on the sole authority of the sovereign. The property of the nation was therefore at the disposal of the crown, which might increase taxes to any amount, and cause them to be levied by force, if force was necessary. The personal freedom of the citizen was equally exposed to aggressions by *lettres de cachet*. The French people, in short, had neither in the strict sense liberty nor property, and if they did not suffer all the inconveniences in practice which so evil a government announces, it was because public opinion, the softened temper of the age, and the good disposition of the kings themselves, did not permit the scenes of cruelty and despotism to be revived in the eighteenth century, which Louis XI. had practised three ages before.

These abuses, and others arising out of the disproportioned privileges of the noblesse and the clergy, who were exempted from contributing to the necessities of the state; the unequal mode of levying the taxes, and other great errors of the constitution; above all, the total absorption of every right and authority in the person of the sovereign,—these were too gross

in their nature, and too destructive in their consequences, to have escaped deep thought on the part of reflecting persons, and hatred and dislike from those who suffered more or less under the practical evils.

They had not, in particular, eluded the observation and censure of the acute reasoners and deep thinkers, who had already become the guiding spirits of the age; but the despotism under which they lived prevented those speculations from assuming a practical and useful character. In a free country, the wise and the learned are not only permitted, but invited, to examine the institutions under which they live, to defend them against the suggestions of rash innovators, or to propose such alterations as the lapse of time and change of manners may render necessary. Their disquisitions are, therefore, usefully and beneficially directed to the repair of the existing government, not to its demolition, and if they propose alteration in parts, it is only for the purpose of securing the rest of the fabric. But in France, no opportunity was permitted of free discussion on politics, any more than on matters of religion.

An essay upon the French monarchy, showing by what means the existing institutions might have been brought more into union with the wishes and wants of the people, must have procured for its author a place in the

Bastille; and yet subsequent events have shown, that a system, which might have introduced prudently and gradually into the decayed frame of the French government the spirit of liberty, which was originally inherent in every feudal monarchy, would have been the most valuable present which political wisdom could have rendered to the country. The bonds which pressed so heavily on the subject might thus have been gradually slackened, and at length totally removed, without the perilous expedient of casting them all loose at once. But the philosophers, who had certainly talents sufficient for the purpose, were not permitted to apply to the state of the French government the original principles on which it was founded, or to trace the manner in which usurpations and abuses had taken place, and propose a mode by which, without varying its form, those encroachments might be restrained, and those abuses corrected. An author was indeed at liberty to speculate at any length upon general doctrines of government; he might imagine to himself an Utopia or Atalantis, and argue upon abstract ideas of the rights in which government originates; but on no account was he permitted to render any of his lucubrations practically useful, by adapting them to the municipal regulations of France. The political sage was placed, with regard to his country, in the condition of a physician prescribing for the

favourite Sultana of some jealous despot, whom he is required to cure without seeing his patient, and without obtaining any accurate knowledge of her malady, its symptoms, and its progress. In this manner the theory of government was kept studiously separated from the practice. The political philosopher might, if he pleased, speculate upon the former, but he was prohibited, under severe personal penalties, to illustrate the subject by any allusion to the latter. Thus, the eloquent and profound work of Montesquieu professed, indeed, to explain the general rights of the people, and the principles upon which government itself rested; but his pages show no mode by which these could be resorted to for the reformation of the constitution of his country. He laid before the patient a medical treatise on disease in general, instead of a special prescription, applying to his peculiar habits and distemper.

In consequence of these unhappy restrictions upon open and manly political discussion, the French government, in its actual state, was never represented as capable of either improvement or regeneration; and while general and abstract doctrines of original freedom were every where the subject of eulogy, it was never considered for a moment in what manner these new and more liberal principles could be applied to the improve-

ment of the existing system. The natural conclusion must have been, that the monarchical government in France was either perfection in itself, and consequently stood in need of no reformation, or that it was so utterly inconsistent with the liberties of the people as to be susceptible of none. No one was hardy enough to claim for it the former character, and, least of all, those who presided in its councils, and seemed to acknowledge the imperfection of the system, by prohibiting all discussion on the subject. It seemed, therefore, to follow, as no unfair inference, that to obtain the advantages which the new elementary doctrines held forth, and which were so desirable and so much desired, a total abolition of the existing government to its very foundation was an indispensable preliminary; and there is little doubt that this opinion prevailed so generally at the time of the Revolution, as to prevent any firm or resolute stand being made in defence even of such of the actual institutions of France, as might have been amalgamated with the proposed reform.

While all practical discussion of the constituti[illegible] France, as a subject either above or be[illegible] philosophical inquiry, was thus cautiously omitted in those works which pretended to treat of civil rights, that of England, with its counterpoises and checks, its liberal principle of equality of rights, the security

which it affords for personal liberty and individual property, and the free opportunities of discussion upon every subject, became naturally the subject of eulogy amongst those who were awakening their countrymen to a sense of the benefits of national freedom. The time was past, when, as in the days of Louis XIV., the French regarded the institutions of the English with contempt, as fit only for merchants and shopkeepers, but unworthy of a nation of warriors, whose pride was in their subordination to their nobles, as that of the nobles consisted in obedience to their king. That prejudice had long passed away, and Frenchmen now admired, not without envy, the noble system of masculine freedom which had been consolidated by the successive efforts of so many patriots in so many ages. A sudden revulsion seemed to take place in their general feelings towards their neighbours, and France, who had so long dictated to all Europe in matters of fashion, seemed now herself disposed to borrow the more simple forms and fashions of her ancient rival. The spirit of imitating the English was carried even to the verge of absurdity. Not only did Frenchmen of quality adopt the round hat and frock coat, which set etiquette at defiance—not only had they English carriages, dogs, and horses, but even English butlers were hired, that the wine, which was the growth of France, might be

placed on the table with the grace peculiar to England. These were, indeed, the mere ebullitions of fashion carried to excess, but, like the foam on the crest of the billow, they argued the depth and strength of the wave beneath, and, insignificant in themselves, were formidable as evincing the contempt with which the French now regarded all those forms and usages which had hitherto been thought peculiar to their own country. This principle of imitation rose to such extravagance, that it was happily termed the Anglomania.[1]

While the young French gallants were emulously employed in this mimicry of the English fashions, relinquishing the external signs of rank which always produce some effect on the vulgar, men of thought and reflection were engaged in analysing those principles

[1] An instance is given, ludicrous in itself, but almost prophetic, when connected with subsequent events. A courtier, deeply infected with the fashion of the time, was riding beside the king's carriage at a full trot, without observing that his horse's heels threw the mud into the royal vehicle. « Vous me crottez, monsieur,» said the king. The horseman, considering the words were « Vous trottez,» and that the prince complimented his equestrian performance, answered, « Oui, sire, à l'Anglaise.» The good-humoured monarch drew up the glass, and only said to the gentleman in the carriage, « Voila une Anglomanie bien forte!» Alas! the unhappy prince lived to see the example of England, in her most dismal period, followed to a much more formidable extent.

of the British government, on which the national character has been formed, and which have afforded her the means of rising from so many reverses, and maintaining a sway among the kingdoms of Europe, so disproportioned to her population and extent.

To complete the conquest of English opinions, even in France herself, over those of French origin, came the consequences of the American War. Those true Frenchmen who disdained to borrow the sentiments of political freedom from England, might now derive them from a country with whom France could have no rivalry, but in whom, on the contrary, she recognized the enemy of the island, in policy or prejudice termed her own natural foe. The deep sympathy manifested by the French in the success of the American insurgents, though diametrically opposite to the interests of their government, or perhaps of the nation at large, was compounded of too many ingredients influencing all ranks, to be overcome or silenced by cold considerations of political prudence. The nobility, always eager of martial distinction, were in general desirous of war, and most of them, the pupils of the celebrated *Encyclopedie*, were doubly delighted to lend their swords to the cause of freedom. The statesmen imagined that they saw, in the success of the American insurgents, the total downfall of the English empire, or at least a

far descended from that pinnacle of dignity which she had attained at the Peace of 1763, and they eagerly urged Louis XVI. to profit by the opportunity, hitherto sought in vain, of humbling a rival so formidable. In the courtly circles, and particularly in that which surrounded Marie Antoinette, the American deputation had the address or good fortune to become popular, by mingling in them with manners and sentiments entirely opposite to those of courts and courtiers, and exhibiting, amid the extremity of refinement, in dress, speech, and manners, a republican simplicity, rendered interesting both by the contrast, and by the talents which Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane evinced, not only in the business of diplomacy, but in the intercourse of society. Impelled by these and other combining causes, a despotic government, whose subjects were already thoroughly imbued with opinions hostile to its constitution in church and state, with a discontented people, and a revenue well nigh bankrupt, was thrust, as if by fatality, into a contest conducted upon principles most adverse to its own existence.

The King, almost alone, whether dreading the expense of a ruinous war, whether alarmed already at the progress of democratic principles, or whether desirous of observing good faith with England, considered that there ought to

be a stronger motive for war, than barely the opportunity of waging it with success; the King, therefore, almost alone, opposed this great political error. It was not the only occasion in which, wiser than his counsellors, he nevertheless yielded up to their urgency opinions founded in unbiassed morality, and unpretending common sense. A good judgment, and a sound moral sense, were the principal attributes of this excellent prince, and happy it would have been had they been mingled with more confidence in himself, and a deeper distrust of others.

Other counsels prevailed over the private opinion of Louis—the war was commenced—successfully carried on, and victoriously concluded. We have seen that the French auxiliaries brought with them to America minds apt to receive, if not already[1] imbued with, those principles of freedom for which the colonies had taken up arms against the mother country, and it is not to be wondered if they returned to France strongly prepossessed in fa-

[1] By some young enthusiasts, the assumption of republican habits was carried to all the heights of revolutionary affectation and extravagance. Ségur mentions a young coxcomb named Mauduit, who already distinguished himself by renouncing the ordinary courtesies of life, and insisting on being called by his christian and surname, without the usual addition of Monsieur.

vour of a cause, for which they had encountered danger, and in which they had reaped honour.

The inferior officers of the French auxiliary army, chiefly men of birth, agreeably to the existing rules of the French service, belonged, most of them, to the class of country nobles, who, from causes already noticed, were far from being satisfied with the system which rendered their rise difficult, in the only profession which their prejudices, and those of France, permitted them to assume. The proportion of plebeians who had intruded themselves, by connivance and indirect means, into the military ranks, looked with eagerness to some change which should give a free and open career to their courage and their ambition, and were proportionally discontented with regulations which were recently adopted, calculated to render their rise in the army more difficult than before.[1] In these sentiments were united the whole of the non-commissioned officers, and the ranks of the com-

[1] Plebeians formerly got into the army by obtaining the subscription of four men of noble birth, attesting their patrician descent; and such certificates, however false, could always be obtained for a small sum. But by a regulation of the Count Ségur, after the American war, candidates for the military profession were obliged to produce a certificate of noble birth from the king's genealogist, in addition to the attestations which were formerly held sufficient.

mon soldiery, all of whom, confiding in their own courage and fortune, now became indignant at those barriers which closed against them the road to military advancement, and to superior command. The officers of superior rank, who derived their descent from the high noblesse, were chiefly young men of ambitious enterprise and warm imaginations, whom not only a love of honour, but an enthusiastic feeling of devotion to the new philosophy, and the political principles which it inculcated, had called to arms. Amongst these were Rochambeau, La Fayette, the Lameths, Chastellux, Ségur, and others of exalted rank, but of no less exalted feelings for the popular cause. They readily forgot, in the full current of their enthusiasm, that their own rank in society was endangered by the progress of popular opinions, or if they at all remembered that their interest was thus implicated, it was with the generous disinterestedness of youth, prompt to sacrifice to the public advantage whatever of selfish immunities was attached to their own condition.

The return of the French army from America thus brought a strong body of auxiliaries to the popular and now prevalent opinions; and the French love of military glory, which had so long been the safeguard of the throne, became now intimately identified with that distinguished portion of the army which had

been so lately and so successfully engaged in defending the claims of the people against the rights of an established government. Their laurels were green and newly gathered, while those which had been obtained in the cause of monarchy were of an ancient date, and tarnished by the reverses of the Seven Years' War. The reception of the returned soldiery and their leaders was proportionally enthusiastic; and it became soon evident, that when the eventful struggle betwixt the existing monarchy and its adversaries should commence, the latter were to have the support in sentiment, and probably in action, of that distinguished part of the army, which had of late maintained and recovered the military character of France. It was, accordingly, from its ranks that the Revolution derived many of its most formidable champions, and it was their example which detached a great proportion of the French soldiers from their natural allegiance to their sovereign, which had been for so many ages expressed in their war-cry of « *Vive le Roi,* » and which was revived, though with an altered object, in that of « *Vive l' Empereur.* »

There remains but to notice the other proximate cause of the Revolution, but which is so intimately connected with its rise and progress, that we cannot disjoin it from our brief review of the revolutionary movements to which it gave the first decisive impulse.

CHAPTER III.

Proximate Cause of the Revolution.—Deranged State of the Finances.—Reforms in the Royal Household.—System of Turgot and Necker—Necker's Exposition of the State of the Public Revenue.—The Red-Book.—Necker displaced—Succeeded by Calonne.—General State of the Revenue.—Assembly of the Notables.—Calonne dismissed.—Archbishop of Sens Administrator of the Finances.—The King's Contest with the Parliament—Bed of Justice—Resistance of the Parliament, and general Disorder in the Kingdom.—Vacillating Policy of the Minister—Royal Sitting—Scheme of forming a Cour Plenière—It proves ineffectual.—Archbishop of Sens retires, and is succeeded by Necker—He resolves to convoke the States General.—Second Assembly of Notables previous to Convocation of the States.—Questions as to the Numbers of which the Tiers État should consist, and the Mode in which the Estates should deliberate.

We have already compared the monarchy of France to an ancient building, which, however decayed by the wasting injuries of time, may long remain standing, from the mere adhesion of its parts, unless it is assailed by some sudden and unexpected shock, the immediate violence of which completes the ruin which the lapse of ages had only prepared. Or if its materials have become dry and combustible, still they

may long wait for the spark which is to awake a general conflagration. Thus, the monarchical government of France, notwithstanding the unsoundness of all its parts, might have for some time continued standing and unconsumed, nay, with timely and judicious repairs, might have been entire at this moment, had the state of the finances of the kingdom permitted the monarch to temporize with the existing discontents and the progress of new opinions, without increasing the taxes of a people already greatly overburthened, and now become fully sensible that these burthens were unequally imposed, and sometimes prodigally dispensed.

A government, like an individual, may be guilty of many acts, both of injustice and folly, with some chance of impunity, provided it possess wealth enough to command partizans and to silence opposition; and history shows us, that as, on the one hand, wealthy and money-saving monarchs have usually been able to render themselves most independent of their subjects, so, on the other, it is from needy princes, and when exchequers are empty, that the people have obtained grants favourable to freedom in exchange for their supplies. The period of pecuniary distress in a government, if it be that when the subjects are most exposed to oppression, is also

the crisis in which they have the best chance of recovering their political rights.

It is in vain that the constitution of a despotic government endeavours, in its forms, to guard against the dangers of such conjunctures, by vesting in the sovereign the most complete and unbounded right to the property of his subjects. This doctrine, however ample in theory, cannot in practice be carried beyond certain bounds, without producing either privy conspiracy or open insurrection, being the violent symptoms of the outraged feelings and exhausted patience of the subject, which in absolute monarchies supply the want of all regular political checks upon the power of the crown. Whenever the point of human sufferance is exceeded, the despot must propitiate the wrath of an insurgent people with the head of his minister, or he may tremble for his own.[1]

In constitutions of a less determined despotical character, there almost always arises some power of check or control, however anomalous, which balances or counteracts the arbitrary exactions of the sovereign, instead of the

[1] When Buonaparte expressed much regret and anxiety on account of the assassination of the Emperor Paul, he was comforted by Fouché with words to the following effect :—« Que voulez-vous ? c'est un mode de destitution propre à ce pays-là ! »

actual resistance of the subjects, as at Fez or Constantinople. This was the case in France.

No constitution could have been more absolute in theory than that of France, for two hundred years past, in the matter of finance; but yet in practice there existed a power of control in the Parliaments, and particularly in that of Paris. These courts, though strictly speaking they were constituted only for the administration of justice, had forced themselves, or been forced by circumstances, into a certain degree of political power, which they exercised in control of the crown, in the imposition of new taxes. It was agreed on all hands, that the royal edicts, enforcing such new impositions, must be registered by the Parliaments; but while the ministers held the act of registering such edicts to be a deed purely ministerial, and the discharge of a function imposed by their official duty, the magistrates insisted, on the other hand, that they possessed the power of deliberating and remonstrating, nay, of refusing to register the royal edicts, and that, unless so registered, these warrants had no force or effect. The Parliaments exercised this power of control on various occasions; and as their interference was always on behalf of the subject, the practice, however anomalous, was sanctioned by public opinion; and, in the absence of all other representatives of the people, France

naturally looked up to the magistrates as the protectors of her rights, and as the only power which could offer even the semblancce of resistance to the arbitrary increase of the burthens of the state. These functionaries cannot be charged with carelessness or cowardice in the discharge of their duty; and as taxes increased and became at the same time less productive, the opposition of the Parliaments became more formidable. Louis XV. endeavoured to break their spirit by suppression of their court, and banishment of its members from Paris; but notwithstanding this temporary victory, he is said to have predicted that his successor might not come off from the renewed contest so successfully.

Louis XVI., with the plain well-meaning honesty which marked his character, restored the Parliaments to their constitutional powers immediately on his accession to the throne, having the generosity to regard their resistance to his grandfather as a merit rather than an offence. In the mean while, the revenue of the kingdom had fallen into a most disastrous condition. The continued and renewed expense of unsuccessful wars, the supplying the demands of a luxurious court, the gratifying hungry co[illegible]s, and enriching needy favourites, had [illegible]sioned large deficits upon the public income of each successive year. The ministers, meanwhile, anxious to provide

for the passing moment of their own administration, were satisfied to put off the evil day by borrowing money at heavy interest, and leasing out, in security of these loans, the various sources of revenue to the farmers-general. On their part, these financiers used the government as bankrupt prodigals are treated by usurious money-brokers, who, feeding their extravagance with the one hand, with the other wring out of their ruined fortunes the most unreasonable recompense for their advances. By a long succession of these ruinous loans, and the various rights granted to guarantee them, the whole finances of France appear to have fallen into total confusion, and presented an inextricable chaos to those who endeavoured to bring them into order. The farmers-general, therefore, however obnoxious to the people, who considered with justice that their overgrown fortunes were nourished by the life-blood of the community, continued to be essentially necessary to the state, the expenses of which they alone could find means of defraying;—thus supporting the government, although Mirabeau said with truth, it was only in the sense in which a rope supports a hanged man.

Louis XVI., fully sensib[illegible] the disastrous state of the public revenue, [illegible] all he could to contrive a remedy. He limited his personal expenses, and those of his household, with a

rigour which approached to parsimony, and dimmed the necessary splendour of the throne. He abolished many pensions, and by doing so not only disobliged those who were deprived of the instant enjoyment of those gratuities, but lost the attachment of the much more numerous class of expectants, who served the court in the hope of obtaining similar gratifications in their turn.[1] Lastly, he dismissed a very large proportion of his household troops and body-guards, affording another subject of discontent to the nobles, out of whose families these corps were recruited, and destroying with his own hand a force devotedly attached to the royal person, and which, in the hour of popular fury, would have been a barrier of inappreciable value. Thus, it was the misfortune of this well-meaning prince, only to

[1] Louis XV. had the arts if not the virtues of a monarch. He asked one of his ministers what he supposed might be the price of the carriage in which they were sitting. The minister, making a great allowance for the monarch's paying *en prince*, yet guessed within two-thirds less than the real sum. When the king named the actual price, the statesman exclaimed, but the monarch cut him short. « Do not attempt, » he said, « to reform the expenses of my household. There are too many, and too great men, who have their share in that extortion, and to make a reformation would give too much discontent. No minister can attempt it with success or with safety. » This is the picture of the waste attending a despotic government—the cup which is filled to the very brim cannot be lifted to the lips without wasting the contents.

weaken his own cause and endanger his safety, by those sacrifices, intended to relieve the burthens of the people, and supply the wants of the state.

The King adopted a broader and more effectual course of reform, by using the advice of upright and skilful ministers, to introduce, as far as possible, some degree of order into the French finances. Turgot, Malesherbes, and Necker, were persons of unquestionable skill, of sound views, and undisputed integrity; and although the last-named minister finally sunk in public esteem, it was only because circumstances had excited such an extravagant opinion of his powers, as could not have been met and realized by those of the first financier who ever lived. These virtuous and patriotic statesmen did all in their power to keep afloat the vessel of the state, and prevent at least the increase of the deficit, which now arose yearly on the public accounts. They, and Necker in particular, introduced economy and retrenchment into all departments of the revenue, restored the public credit without increasing the national burthens, and, by obtaining loans on reasonable terms, were fortunate enough to find funds for the immediate support of the American war, expensive as it was, without pressing on the patience of the people by new impositions. Could this state of matters have been supported for some years,

opportunities might in that time have occurred for adapting the French mode of government to the new lights which the age afforded. Public opinion, joined to the beneficence of the sovereign, had already wrought several important and desirable changes. Many obnoxious and oppressive laws had been expressly abrogated, or tacitly suffered to become obsolete, and there never sate a king upon the French or any other throne, more willing than Louis XVI. to sacrifice his own personal interest and prerogative to whatever seemed to be the benefit of the state. Even at the very commencement of his reign, and when obeying only the dictates of his own beneficence, he reformed the penal code of France, which then savoured of the barbarous times in which it had originated—he abolished the use of torture—he restored to freedom those prisoners of state, the mournful inhabitants of the Bastille and other fortresses, who had been the victims of his grandfather's jealousy—the compulsory labour called the *corvée*, levied from the peasantry, and one principal source of popular discontent, had been abolished in some provinces and modified in others—and while the police was under the regulation of the sage and virtuous Malesherbes, its arbitrary powers had been seldom so exercised as to become the subject of complaint. In short, the monarch partook the influence of public opinion along

with his subjects, and there seemed just reason to hope, that, had times remained moderate, the monarchy of France might have been reformed instead of being destroyed.

Unhappily, convulsions of the state became from day to day more violent, and Louis XVI., who possessed the benevolence and good intentions of his ancestor, Henry IV., wanted his military talents, and his political firmness. In consequence of this deficiency, the King suffered himself to be distracted by a variety of counsels; and vacillating, as all must who act more from a general desire to do that which is right, than upon any determined and well-considered system, he placed his power and his character at the mercy of the changeful course of events, which firmness might have at least combated, if it could not control. But it is remarkable, that Louis resembled Charles I. of England more than any of his own ancestors in a want of self-confidence, which led to frequent alterations of mind and changes of measures, as well as in a tendency to uxoriousness, which enabled both Henrietta Maria, and Marie Antoinette, to use a fatal influence upon their counsels. Both sovereigns fell under the same suspicion of being deceitful and insincere, when perhaps both, but certainly Louis, only changed his course of conduct from a change of his own opinion, or from

suffering himself to be over-persuaded, and deferring to the sentiments of others.

Few monarchs of any country, certainly, have changed their ministry, and with their ministry their councils and measures, so often as Louis XVI.; and with this unhappy consequence, that he neither persevered in a firm and severe course of government long enough to inspire respect, nor in a conciliatory and yielding policy for a sufficient time to propitiate regard and inspire confidence. It is with regret we notice this imperfection in a character otherwise so excellent; but it was one of the leading causes of the Revolution, that a prince, possessed of power too great to be either kept or resigned with safety, hesitated between the natural resolution to defend his hereditary prerogative, and the sense of justice which induced him to restore such part of it as had been usurped from the people by his ancestors. By adhering to the one course, he might have been the conqueror of the Revolution; by adopting the other, he had a chance to be its guide and governor; by hesitating between them, he became its victim.

It was in consequence of this vacillation of purpose that Louis, in 1781, sacrificed Turgot and Necker to the intrigues of the court. These statesmen had formed a plan for new-modelling the financial part of the French monarchy, which, while it should gratify the people by

admitting representatives on their part to some influence in the imposition of new taxes, might have released the King from the interference of the Parliaments (whose office of remonstrance, although valuable as a shelter from despotism, was often arbitrarily, and even factiously exercised), and have transferred to the direct representatives of the people that superintendance, which ought never to have been in other hands.

For this purpose the ministers proposed to institute, in the several provinces of France, convocations of a representative nature, one half of whom was to be chosen from the Commons, or Third Estate, and the other named by the Nobles and Clergy in equal proportions, and which assemblies, without having the right of rejecting the edicts imposing new taxes, were to apportion them amongst the subjects of their several provinces. This system contained in it much that was excellent, and might have opened the road for further improvements on the constitution; while, at the same time, it would probably, so early as 1781, have been received as a boon, by which the subjects were called to participate in the royal councils, rather than as a concession extracted from the weakness of the sovereign, or from his despair of his own resources. It afforded, also, an opportunity peculiarly desirable in France, of forming the minds of the

people to the discharge of public duty. The British nation owe much of the practical benefits of their constitution to the habits with which almost all men are trained to exercise some public right in head-courts, vestries, and other deliberative bodies, where their minds are habituated to the course of business, and accustomed to the manner in which it can be most regularly dispatched. This advantage would have been supplied to the French by Necker's scheme.

But with all the advantages which it promised, this plan of provincial assemblies miscarried, owing to the emulous opposition of the Parliament of Paris, who did not chuse that any other body than their own should be considered as the guardians of what remained in France of popular rights.

Another measure of Necker was of more dubious policy. This was the printing and publishing of his Report to the Sovereign of the state of the revenues of France. The minister probably thought this display of candour, which, however proper in itself, was hitherto unknown in the French administration, might be useful to the King, whom it represented as acquiescing in public opinion, and appearing not only ready, but solicitous, to collect the sentiments of his subjects on the business of the state. Necker might also deem the *Compte Rendu* a prudent measure

on his own account, to secure the popular favour, and maintain himself by the public esteem against the influence of court intrigue. Or lastly, both these motives might be mingled with the natural vanity of showing the world that France enjoyed, in the person of Necker, a minister bold enough to penetrate into the labyrinth of confusion and obscurity which had been thought inextricable by all his predecessors, and was at length enabled to render to the sovereign and people of France a detailed and balanced account of the state of their finances.

Neither did the result of the national balance-sheet appear so astounding as to require its being concealed as a state mystery. The deficit, or the balance, by which the expenses of government exceeded the revenue of the country, by no means indicated a desperate state of finance, or one which must either demand immense sacrifices, or otherwise lead to national bankruptcy. It did not greatly exceed the annual defalcation of two millions, a sum which, to a country so fertile as France, might even be termed trifling. At the same time, Necker brought forward a variety of reductions and economical arrangements, by which he proposed to provide for this deficiency, without either incurring debt or burthening the subject with additional taxes.

But although this general exposure of the

expenses of the state, this appeal from the government to the people, had the air of a frank and generous proceeding, and was, in fact, a step to the great constitutional point of establishing in the nation and its representatives the sole power of granting supplies, there may be doubt whether it was not rather too hastily resorted to. Those from whose eyes the cataract has been removed, are for some time deprived of light, and, in the end, it is supplied to them by limited degrees; but that glare which was at once poured upon the nation of France served to dazzle as many as it illuminated. The *Compte Rendu* was the general subject of conversation, not only in coffee-houses and public promenades, but in saloons and ladies' boudoirs, and amongst society better qualified to discuss the merits of the last comedy, or any other frivolity of the day. The very array of figures had something ominous and terrible in it, and the word *deficit* was used, like the name of Marlborough of old, to frighten children with.

To most it indicated the total bankruptcy of the nation, and prepared many to act with the selfish and short-sighted policy of sailors, who plunder the cargo of their own vessel in the act of shipwreck.

Others saw, in the account of expenses attached to the person and dignity of the prince, a wasteful expenditure, which in that hour of

avowed necessity a nation might well dispense with. Men began to number the guards and household pomp of the sovereign and his court, as the daughters of Lear did the train of their father. The reduction already commenced might be carried, thought these provident persons, yet farther:—

> What needs he five-and-twenty, ten, or five?

And no doubt some, even at this early period, arrived at the ultimate conclusion,

> What needs ONE?

Besides the domestic and household expenses of the sovereign, which, so far as personal, were on the most moderate scale, the public mind was much more justly revolted at the large sum yearly squandered among needy courtiers and their dependents, or even less justifiably lavished upon those whose rank and fortune ought to have placed them far above adding to the burthens of the subjects. The King had endeavoured to abridge this list of gratuities and pensions, but the system of corruption which had prevailed for two centuries was not to be abolished in an instant; the throne, already tottering, could not immediately be deprived of the band of stipendiary grandees whom it had so long maintained, and who afforded it their countenance in return, and it was perhaps impo-

litic to fix the attention of the public on a disclosure so peculiarly invidious, until the opportunity of correcting it should arrive;—it was like the disclosure of a wasting sore, useless and disgusting unless when shown to a surgeon, and for the purpose of cure. Yet, though the account rendered by the minister of the finances, while it passed from the hand of one idler to another, and occupied on sofas and toilets the place of the latest novel, did doubtless engage giddy heads in vain and dangerous speculation, something was to be risked in order to pave the way of regaining for the French subjects the right most essential to freemen, that of granting or refusing their own supplies. The publicity of the distressed state of the finances induced a general conviction that the oppressive system of taxation, and that of approaching bankruptcy, which was a still greater evil, could only be removed or avoided by resorting to the nation itself, convoked in their ancient form of representation, which was called the States-general.

It was true that, through length of time, the nature and powers of this body were forgotten, if indeed they had ever been very thoroughly fixed: and it was also true that the constitution of the States-general of 1614, which was the last date of their being assembled, was not likely to suit a period when the

country was so much changed, both in character and circumstances. The doubts concerning the composition of the medicine, and its probable effects, seldom abate the patient's confidence. All joined in desiring the convocation of this representative body, and all expected that such an assembly would be able to find some satisfactory remedy for the pressing evils of the state. The cry was general, and, as usual in such cases, few who joined in it knew exactly what it was they wanted.

Looking back on the period of 1780, with the advantage of our own experience, it is possible to see a chance, though perhaps a doubtful one, of avoiding the universal shipwreck which was fated to ensue. If the royal government, determining to gratify the general wish, had taken the initiative in conceding the great national measure as a boon flowing from the prince's pure good-will and love of his subjects, and if measures had been taken rapidly and decisively to secure seats in these bodies, but particularly in the Tiers État, to men known for their moderation and adherence to the monarchy, it seems probable that the crown might have secured such an interest in a body of its own creation, as would have silenced the attempts of any heated spirits to hurry the kingdom into absolute revolution. The reverence paid to the throne for so many centuries had yet all the influence

of unassailed sanctity; the King was still the master of an army, commanded under him by his nobles, and as yet animated by the spirit of loyalty, which is the natural attribute of the military profession; the minds of men were not warmed at once, and wearied, by a fruitless and chicaning delay, which only showed the extreme indisposition of the court to grant what they had no means of ultimately refusing; nor had public opinion yet been agitated by the bold discussions of a thousand pamphleteers, who, under pretence of enlightening the people, prepossessed their minds with the most extreme ideas of the popular character of the representation of the Tiers État, and its superiority over every other power of the state. Ambitious and unscrupulous men would then hardly have had the time or boldness to form those audacious pretensions which their ancestors dreamed not of, and which the course of six or seven years of protracted expectation, and successive renewals of hope, succeeded by disappointment, enabled them to mature.

Such a fatal interval, however, was suffered to intervene, between the first idea of convoking the States-general, and the period when that measure became inevitable. Without this delay, the King, invested with all his royal prerogatives, and at the head of the military force, might have surrendered with a good

grace such parts of his power as were inconsistent with the liberal opinions of the time, and such surrender must have been received as a grace, since it could not have been exacted as a sacrifice. The conduct of the government, in the interim, towards the nation whose representatives it was shortly to meet, resembled that of an insane person, who should by a hundred teazing and vexatious insults irritate into frenzy the lion, whose cage he was about to open, and to whose fury he must necessarily be exposed.

Necker, whose undoubted honesty, as well as his republican candour, had rendered him highly popular, had, under the influence of the old intriguer Maurepas, been dismissed from his office as Minister of Finance, in 1781. The witty, versatile, selfish, and cunning Maurepas had the art to hold his power till the last moment of his long life, and died at the moment when the knell of death was a summons to call him from impending ruin. He made, according to an expressive northern proverb, the « day and way alike long; » and died just about the period when the system of evasion and palliation, of usurious loans and lavish bounties, could scarce have served longer to save him from disgrace. Vergennes, who succeeded him, was, like himself, a courtier rather than a statesman; more studious to preserve his own power, by continuing the

same system of partial expedients and temporary shifts, than willing to hazard the King's favour, or the popularity of his administration, by attempting any scheme of permanent utility or general reformation. Calonne, the Minister of Finance, who had succeeded to that office after the brief administrations of Fleury and d'Ormesson, called on by his duty to the most difficult and embarrassing branch of government, was possessed of a more comprehensive genius, and more determined courage, than his principal, Vergennes. So early as the year 1784, the deficiency betwixt the receipts of the whole revenues of the state, and the expenditure, extended to six hundred and eighty-four millions of livres, in British money about equal to twenty-eight millions four hundred thousand pounds sterling; but then a certain large portion of this debt consisted in annuities granted by government, which were annually in the train of being extinguished by the death of the holders; and there was ample room for saving, in the mode of collecting the various taxes. So that large as the sum of deficit appeared, it could not have been very formidable, considering the resources of so rich a country; but it was necessary, that the pressure of new burdens, to be imposed at this exigence, should be equally divided amongst the orders of the state. The Third Estate, or Commons, had been exhausted under the

weight of taxes, which fell upon them alone, and Calonne formed the bold and laudable design of compelling the Clergy and Nobles, hitherto exempted from taxation, to contribute their share to the revenues of the state

This, however, was, in the present state of the public, too bold a scheme to be carried into execution without the support of something resembling a popular representation. At this crisis, again might Louis have summoned the States-general, with some chance of uniting their suffrages with the wishes of the crown. The King would have found himself in a natural alliance with the Commons, in a plan to abridge those immunities, which the Clergy and Nobles possessed, to the prejudice of the Third Estate. He would thus, in the outset at least, have united the influence and interests of the crown with those of the popular party, and established something like a balance in the representative body, in which the throne must have had considerable weight.

Apparently, Calonne and his principal, Vergennes, were afraid to take this manly and direct course, as indeed the ministers of an arbitrary monarch can rarely be supposed willing to call in the aid of a body of popular representatives. The ministers endeavoured, therefore, to supply the want of a body like the States-general, by summoning together an assembly of what was termed the Notables, or

principal persons in the kingdom. This was in every sense an unadvised measure.[1] With something resembling the form of a great national council, the Notables had no right to represent the nation, neither did it come within their province to pass any resolution whatever. Their post was merely that of an extraordinary body of counsellors, who deliberated on any subject which the King might submit to their consideration, and were to express their opinion in answer to the sovereign's interrogatories; but an assembly, which could only start opinions and debate upon them, without coming to any effective or potential decision, was a fatal resource at a crisis when decision was peremptorily necessary, and when all vague and irrelevant discussion was, as at a moment of national fermentation, to be cautiously avoided. Above all, there was this great error in having recourse to the Assembly of the Notables, that, consisting entirely of the privileged orders, the council was composed of the individuals most inimical to the equality of taxes, and most tenacious of those very immunities which were struck at by the scheme of the Minister of Finance.

Calonne found himself opposed at every point, and received from the Notables remon-

[1] They were summoned on 29th December, 1786, and met on 22d February of the subsequent year.

strances instead of support and countenance. That Assembly censuring all his plans, and rejecting his proposals, he was in their presence like a rash necromancer, who has been indeed able to raise a demon, but is unequal to the task of guiding him when evoked. He was further weakened by the death of Vergennes, and finally obliged to resign his place and his country, a sacrifice at once to court intrigue and popular odium. Had this able but rash minister convoked the States-general instead of the Notables, he would have been at least sure of the support of the Third Estate, or Commons; and, allied with them, might have carried through so popular a scheme, as that which went to establish taxation upon a just and equal principle, affecting the rich as well as the poor, the proud prelate and wealthy noble, as well as the industrious cultivator of the soil.

Calonne having retired to England from popular hatred, his perilous office devolved upon the Archbishop of Sens, afterwards the Cardinal de Loménie, who was raised to the painful pre-eminence[1] by the interest of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, whose excellent qualities were connected with a spirit of state-intrigue proper to the sex in such elevated situations, which but too frequently thwarted

[1] May, 1787.

or bore down the more candid intentions of her husband, and tended, though on her part unwittingly, to give his public measures, sometimes adopted on his own principles, and sometimes influenced by her intrigues and solicitations, an appearance of vacillation, and even of duplicity, which greatly injured them both in the public opinion. The new minister finding it as difficult to deal with the Assembly of Notables as his predecessor, the King finally dissolved that body, without having received from them either the countenance or good counsel which had been expected, thus realizing the opinion expressed by Voltaire concerning such convocations:

> De tous ces États l'effet le plus commun,
> Est de voir tous nos maux, sans en soulager un.

After dismission of the Notables, the minister adopted or recommended a line of conduct so fluctuating and indecisive, so violent at one time in support of the royal prerogative, and so pusillanimous when he encountered resistance from the newly-awakened spirit of liberty, that had he been bribed to render the crown at once odious and contemptible, or to engage his master in a line of conduct which should irritate the courageous, and encourage the timid, among his dissatisfied subjects, the Archbishop of Sens could hardly, after the deepest thought, have adopted measures better adapted

for such a purpose. As if determined to bring matters to an issue betwixt the King and the Parliament of Paris, he laid before the latter two new edicts for taxes, similar in most respects to those which had been recommended by his predecessor Calonne to the Notables. The Parliament refused to register these edicts, being the course which the minister ought to have expected. He then resolved upon a display of the royal prerogative in its most arbitrary and obnoxious form. A Bed of Justice, as it was termed, was held,[1] where the King, presiding in person over the court of Parliament, commanded the edicts imposing certain new taxes to be registered in his own presence; thus, by an act of authority emanating directly from the sovereign, beating down the only species of opposition which the subjects, through any organ whatsoever, could offer to the increase of taxation.

The Parliament yielded the semblance of a momentary obedience, but protested solemnly, that the edicts having been registered solely by the royal command, and against their unanimous opinion, should not have the force of a law. They remonstrated also to the throne in terms of great freedom and energy, distinctly intimating, that they could not and would not be the passive instruments, through

[1] 6th August, 1787.

the medium of whom the public was to be loaded with new impositions; and they expressed, for the first time, in direct terms, the proposition, fraught with the fate of France, that neither the edicts of the King, nor the registration of those edicts by the Parliament, were sufficient to impose permanent burthens on the people; but that such taxation was competent to the States-general only.

In punishment of their undaunted defence of the popular cause, the Parliament was banished to Troyes; the government thus increasing the national discontent by the removal of the principal court of the kingdom, and by all the evils incident to a delay of public justice. The Provincial Parliaments supported the principles adopted by their brethren of Paris. The Chamber of Accounts, and the Court of Aids, the judicial establishments next in rank to that of the Parliament, also remonstrated against the taxes, and refused to enforce them. They were not enforced accordingly; and thus, for the first time, during two centuries at least, the royal authority of France, being brought into direct collision with public opinion and resistance, was, by the energy of the subject, compelled to retrograde and yield ground. This was the first direct and immediate movement of that mighty Revolution, which afterwards rushed to its crisis like a rock rolling down a mountain. This

was the first torch which was actually applied to the various combustibles which lay scattered through France, and which we have endeavoured to analyze. The flame soon spread into the provinces. The nobles of Brittany broke out into a kind of insurrection; the Parliament of Grenoble impugned by a solemn decree the legality of *lettres de cachet*. Strange and alarming fears,—wild and boundless hopes,—inconsistent rumours,—a vague expectation of impending events,—all contributed to agitate the public mind. The quick and mercurial tempers which chiefly distinguish the nation, were half maddened with suspense, while even the dull nature of the lowest and most degraded of the community felt the coming impulse of extraordinary changes, as cattle are observed to be disturbed before an approaching thunder-storm.

The minister could not sustain his courage in such a menacing conjuncture, yet unhappily attempted a show of resistance, instead of leaving the King to the influence of his own sound sense and excellent disposition, which also induced him to chuse the means of conciliation. There was indeed but one choice, and it lay betwixt civil war or concession. A despot would have adopted the former course, and, withdrawing from Paris, would have gathered around him the army still his own. A patriotic monarch (and such was Louis XVI.

when exercising his own judgment) would have chosen the road of concession; yet his steps, even in retreating, would have been so firm, and his attitude so manly, that the people would not have ventured to ascribe to fear what flowed solely from a spirit of conciliation. But the conduct of the minister, or of those who directed his motions, was an alternation of irritating opposition to the public voice, and of ill-timed concession to its demands, which implied an understanding impaired by the perils of the conjuncture, and unequal alike to the task of avoiding them by concession, or resisting them with courage.

The King, indeed, recalled the Parliament of Paris from their exile, coming, at the same time, under an express engagement to convoke the States-general, and leading the subjects, of course, to suppose that the new imposts were to be left to their consideration. But, as if to irritate men's minds, by showing a desire to elude the execution of what had been promised, the minister ventured, in an evil hour, to hazard another experiment upon the firmness of their nerves, and again to commit the dignity of the sovereign by bringing him personally to issue a command, which experience had shown the Parliament were previously resolved to disobey. By this new proceeding, the King was induced to hold what was called a Royal Sitting of the Parliament,

which resembled in all its forms a Bed of Justice, except that it seems as if the commands of the monarch were esteemed less authoritative when so issued, than when they were, as on the former occasion, delivered in this last obnoxious assembly.

Thus, at less advantage than before, and, at all events, after the total failure of a former experiment, the King, arrayed in all the forms of his royalty, once more, and for the last time, convoked his Parliament in person; and again with his own voice commanded the court to register a royal edict for a loan of four hundred and twenty millions of francs, to be raised in the course of five years.[1] This demand gave occasion to a debate which lasted nine hours, and was only closed by the King rising up, and issuing at length his positive and imperative orders that the loan should be registered. To the astonishment of the meeting, the first prince of the blood, the Duke of Orleans, arose, as if in reply, and demanded to know if they were assembled in a Bed of Justice or a Royal Sitting; and receiving for answer that the latter was the quality of the meeting, he entered a solemn protest against the proceedings.[2] Thus was the authority of

[1] M. Ch. Lacretelle says four years.—Vid. *Hist. de France pendant le* 18e *siècle*, vol. VI. pag. 2[illegible]. Ed.

[2] These memorable events took place on 19th November, 1787.

the King once more brought in direct opposition to the assertors of the rights of the people, as if on purpose to show, in the face of the whole nation, that its terrors were only those of a phantom, whose shadowy bulk might overawe the timid, but could offer no real cause of fear when courageously opposed.

The minister did not, however, give way without such an ineffectual struggle, as at once showed the weakness of the royal authority, and the willingness to wield it with the despotic sway of former times. Two members of the Parliament of Paris[1] were imprisoned in remote fortresses, and the Duke of Orleans was sent in exile to his estate.

A long and animated exchange of remonstrances followed betwixt the King and the Parliament, in which the former acknowledged his weakness, even by entering into the discussion of his prerogative, as well as by the concessions he found himself obliged to tender. Meantime, the Archbishop of Sens nourished the romantic idea of getting rid of these refractory courts entirely, and at the same time to evade the convocation of the States-general, substituting in their place the erection of a *Cour-plenière*, or ancient Feudal Court, composed of princes, peers, marshals of France, deputies from the provinces, and other distin-

[1] D'Eprémenil and Gaislard. Ed.

guished persons, who should in future exercise all the higher and nobler duties of the Parliaments, thus reduced to their original and proper duties as courts of justice. But a court, or council of the ancient feudal times, with so slight an infusion of popular representation, could in no shape have accorded with the ideas which now generally prevailed; and so much was this felt to be the case, that many of the peers, and other persons nominated members of the *Cour-plenière*, declined the seats proposed to them, and the whole plan fell to the ground.

Meantime, violence succeeded to violence, and remonstrance to remonstrance. The Parliament of Paris, and all the provincial bodies of the same description, being suspended from their functions, and the course of regular justice interrupted, the spirit of revolt became general through the realm, and broke out in riots and insurrections of a formidable description; while, at the same time, the inhabitants of the capital were observed to become dreadfully agitated.

There wanted not writers to fan the rising discontent; and, what seems more singular, they were permitted to do so without interruption, notwithstanding the deepened jealousy with which free discussion was now regarded in France. Libels and satires of

every description were publicly circulated, without an attempt on the part of the government to suppress the publications, or to punish their authors, although the most scandalous attacks on the royal family, and on the queen in particular, were dispersed along with these political effusions. It seemed as if the arm of power was paralyzed, and the bonds of authority which had so long fettered the French people were falling asunder of themselves; for the liberty of the press, so long unknown, was now openly assumed and exercised, without the government daring to interfere.

To conclude the picture, as if God and man had alike determined the fall of this ancient monarchy, a hurricane of most portentous and unusual character burst on the kingdom, and laying waste the promised harvest far and wide, shewed to the terrified inhabitants the prospect at once of poverty and famine, added to those of national bankruptcy and a distracted government.

The latter evils seemed fast advancing; for the state of the finances became so utterly desperate, that Louis was under the necessity of stopping a large proportion of the treasury payments, and issuing bills for the deficiency. At this awful crisis, fearing for the King, and more for himself, the Archbishop of Sens re-

tired from administration,[1] and left the monarch, while bankruptcy and famine threatened the kingdom, to manage as he might, amid the storms which the measures of the minister himself had provoked to the uttermost.

A new premier, and a total alteration of measures, were to be resorted to, while Necker, the popular favourite, called to the helm of the state, regretted, with bitter anticipation of misfortune, the time which had been worse than wasted under the rule of the Archbishop, who had employed it in augmenting the enemies and diminishing the resources of the crown, and forcing the King on such measures as caused the royal authority to be generally regarded as the common enemy of all ranks of the kingdom. To redeem the royal pledge by convoking the States-general, seemed to Necker the most fair as well as most politic proceeding; and indeed this afforded the only chance of once more reconciling the prince with the people, though it was now yielding that to a demand, which two years before would have been received as a boon.

We have already observed that the constitution of this Assembly of National Representatives was little understood, though the phrase was in the mouth of every one. It was to be

[1] 25th August, 1788. The Archbishop fled to Italy with great expedition, after he had given in his resignation to his unfortunate sovereign.

the panacea to the disorders of the nation, yet men knew imperfectly the mode of composing this universal medicine, or the manner of its operation. Or rather, the people of France invoked the assistance of this national council, as they would have done that of a tutelary angel, with full confidence in his power and benevolence, though they neither knew the form in which he might appear, nor the nature of the miracles which he was to perform in their behalf. It has been strongly objected to Necker, that he neglected, on the part of the crown, to take the initiative line of conduct on this important occasion, and it has been urged that it was the minister's duty, without making any question, or permitting any doubt, to assume that mode of convening the States, and regulating them when assembled, which should best tend to secure the tottering influence of his master. But Necker probably thought the time was past in which this power might have been assumed by the crown without exciting jealousy or opposition. The royal authority, he might recollect, had been of late years repeatedly strained, until it had repeatedly given way, and the issue, first of the Bed of Justice, and then of the Royal Sitting, was sufficient to show that words of authority would be wasted in vain upon disobedient ears, and might only excite a resistance which would prove its own lack of power.

It was, therefore, advisable not to trust to the unaided exercise of prerogative, but to strengthen instead the regulations which might be adopted for the constitution of the States-general, by the approbation of some public body independent of the King and his ministers. And with this purpose, Necker convened a second meeting of the Notables,[1] and laid before them, for their consideration, his plan for the constitution of the States-general.

There were two great points submitted to this body, concerning the constitution of the States-general. 1. In what proportion the deputies of the Three Estates should be represented? 2. Whether, when assembled, the Nobles, Clergy, and Third Estate, or Commons, should act separately as distinct chambers, or sit and vote as one united body?

Necker, a minister of an honest and candid disposition, a republican also, and therefore on principle a respecter of public opinion, unhappily did not recollect, that to be well-formed and accurate, public opinion should be founded on the authority of men of talents and integrity; and that the popular mind must be pre-occupied by arguments of a sound and virtuous tendency, else the enemy will sow tares, and the public will receive it in the absence of more whole-

[1] November, 1788.

some grain. Perhaps also, this minister found himself less in his element when treating of state affairs, than while acting in his proper capacity as a financier. However that may be, Necker's conduct resembled that of an unresolved general, who directs his movements by the report of a council of war. He did not sufficiently perceive the necessity that the measures to be taken should originate with himself rather than arise from the suggestion of others, and did not, therefore, avail himself of his situation and high popularity, to recommend such general preliminary arrangements as might preserve the influence of the crown in the States-general, without encroaching on the rights of the subject. The silence of Necker leaving all in doubt, and open to discussion, those arguments had most weight with the public which ascribed most importance to the Third Estate. The talents of the Nobles and Clergy might be considered as having been already in vain appealed to in the two sessions of the Notables, an assembly composed chiefly out of the privileged classes, and whose advice and opinion had been given without producing any corresponding good effect. The Parliament had declared themselves incompetent to the measures necessary for the exigencies of the kingdom. The course adopted by the King indicated doubt and uncertainty, if not

incapacity. The Tiers État, therefore, was the body of counsellors to whom the nation looked at this critical conjuncture.

« What is the Tiers État? » formed the title of a pamphlet by the Abbé Siéyes; and the answer returned by the author was such as augmented all the magnificent ideas already floating in men's minds concerning the importance of this order. « The Tiers État, » said he, « comprehends the whole nation of France, excepting only the Nobles and Clergy. » This view of the matter was so far successful, that the Notables recommended that the Commons, or Third Estate, should have a body of representatives equal to those of the Nobles and Clergy united, and should thus form, in point of relative numbers, the moiety of the whole delegates.[1]

This, however, would have been comparatively of small importance, had it been determined that the Three Estates were to sit, deliberate, and vote, not as a united body, but in three several chambers.

Necker conceded to the Tiers État the right of double representation, but seemed prepared to maintain the ancient order of debating and voting by separate chambers. The crown had been already worsted by the rising spirit of the country in every attempt which it had made to

[1] See Lacretelle's *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, vol. VI. pag. 280. Ed.

stand through its own unassisted strength; and torn as the bodies of the clergy and nobles were by internal dissensions, and weakened by the degree of popular odium with which they were loaded, it would have required an artful consolidation of their force, and an intimate union betwixt them and the crown, to maintain a balance against the popular claims of the Commons, likely to be at once so boldly urged by themselves, and so favourably viewed by the nation. All this was, however, left, in a great measure, to accident, while every chance was against its being arranged in the way most advantageous to the monarchy.

The minister ought also in policy to have paved the way, for securing a party in the Third Estate itself, which should bear some character of royalism. This might doubtless have been done by the usual ministerial arts of influencing elections, or gaining over to the crown-interest some of the many men of talents, who, determined to raise themselves in this new world, had not yet settled to which side they were to give their support. But Necker, less acquainted with men than with mathematics, imagined that every member had intelligence enough to see the measures best calculated for the public good, and virtue enough to follow them faithfully and exclusively. It was in vain that the Marquis de Bouillé pointed out the dangers arising from

the constitution assigned to the States-general, and insisted that the minister was arming the popular part of the nation against the two privileged orders, and that the latter would soon experience the effects of their hatred, animated by self-interest and vanity, the most active passions of mankind. Necker calmly replied, that there was a necessary reliance to be placed on the virtues of the human heart;—the maxim of a worthy man, but not of an enlightened statesman,[1] who has but too much reason to know how often both the virtues and the prudence of human nature are surmounted by its prejudices and passions.

It was in this state of doubt, and total want of information, that the King was to meet the representatives of the people, whose elections had been trusted entirely to chance, without even an attempt to influence them in favour of the most eligible persons. Yet surely the crown, hitherto almost the sole acknowledged authority in France, should have been provided with supporters in the new authority which was to be assembled. At least the minister might have been prepared with some system or plan of proceeding, upon which this most

[1] See *Mémoires de Bouillé*. Madame de Staël herself admits this deficiency in the character of a father, of whom she was justly proud :—« Se fiant trop, il faut l'avouer, à l'empire de la raison.»—*Considérations sur la Révolution*, vol. I. p. 171.

important convention was to conduct its deliberations; but there was not even an attempt to take up the reins which were floating on the necks of those who were for the first time harnessed to the chariot of the state. All was expectation, mere vague and unauthorized hope, that in this multitude of counsellors there would be found safety.[1]

Hitherto we have described the silent and smooth, but swift and powerful stream of innovation, as it rolled on to the edge of the sheer precipice. We are now to view the precipitate tumult and terrors of the cataract.

[1] A calembourg of the period presaged a different result.—« So numerous a concourse of state-physicians assembled to consult for the weal of the nation announced,» it was said, « the imminent danger and approaching death of the patient.»

CHAPTER IV.

Meeting of the States-general.—Predominant Influence of the Tiers État—Property not represented sufficiently in that B[illegible]—General Character of the Members.—[illegible]on of the Estate of the Nobles—And of the [illegible].—Plan of forming the Three Estates into Two Houses—Its Advantages—It fails.—The Clergy unite with the Tiers État, which assumes the Title of the National Assembly.—They assume the Task of Legislation, and declare all former Fiscal Regulations illegal.—They assert their Determination to continue their Se[illegible]—Royal Sitting—Terminates in the Triumph of the Assembly.—Parties in that Body—Mounier—Constitutionalists—Republicans—Jacobins—Orleans.

THE Estates-general of France met at Versailles on the 5th May, 1789, and that was indisputably the first day of the Revolution. The Abbé Siéyes, in a pamphlet which we have mentioned, had already asked, « What was the Third Estate?—It was *the whole nation.* What had it been hitherto in a political light?—Nothing. What was it about to become presently?—Something.» Had the last answer been *Everything*, it would have been nearer the truth, for it soon appeared that this Third Estate, which, in the year 1614, the Nobles had

refused to acknowledge even as a younger brother[1] of their order, was now, like the rod of the prophet, to swallow up all those who affected to share its power. Even amid the pageantry with which the ceremonial of the first sitting abounded, it was clearly visible that the wishes, hopes, and interest of the public, were exclusively fixed upon the representatives of the Commons. The rich garments and floating plumes of the nobility, and the reverend robes of the clergy, had nothing to fix the public eye; their sounding and emphatic titles had nothing to win the ear; the recollection of the high feats of the one, and long-sanctified characters of the other order, had nothing to influence the mind of the spectators. All eyes were turned on the members of the Third Estate, in a plebeian and humble costume, corresponding to their lowly birth and occupation, as the only portion of the assembly from whom they looked for the lights and the counsels which the time demanded.

It would be absurd to assert, that the body which thus engrossed the national attention was devoid of talents to deserve it. On the

[1] The Baron de Senneci, when the Estates of the King dom were compared to three brethren, of which the Tiers État was youngest, declared that the Commons of France had no title to arrogate such a relationship with the Nobles, to whom they were so far inferior in blood and in estimation.

contrary, the Tiers État contained a large proportion of the learning, the intelligence, and the eloquence of the kingdom; but unhappily it was composed of men of theory rather than of practice, men more prepared to change than to preserve or repair; and, above all, of men, who, generally speaking, were not directly concerned in the preservation of peace and order, by possessing a large property in the country.

The due proportion in which talents and property are represented in the British House of Commons, is perhaps the best assurance for the stability of the constitution. Men of talents, bold, enterprising, eager for distinction, and ambitious of power, suffer no opportunity to escape of recommending such measures as may improve the general system, and raise to distinction those by whom they are proposed; while men of substance, desirous of preserving the property which they possess, are scrupulous in scrutinizing every new measure, and steady in rejecting such as are not accompanied with the most certain prospect of advantage to the state. Talent, eager and active, desires the means of employment; Property, cautious, doubtful, jealous of innovation, acts as a regulator rather than an impulse on the machine, by preventing its moving either too rapidly, or changing too suddenly. The over-caution of those by whom property is

represented may sometimes, indeed, delay a projected improvement, but much more frequently impedes a rash and hazardous experiment. Looking back on the parliamentary history of two centuries, it is easy to see how much practical wisdom has been derived from the influence exercised by those members called Country Gentlemen, who, unambitious of distinguishing themselves by their eloquence, and undesirous of mingling in the ordinary debates of the house, make their sound and unsophisticated good sense heard and understood upon every crisis of importance, in a manner alike respected by the ministry and the opposition of the day,—by the professed statesmen of the house, whose daily business is legislation, and whose thoughts, in some instances, are devoted to public affairs, because they have none of their own much worth looking after. In this great and most important characteristic of representation, the Tiers État of France was necessarily deficient; in fact, the part of the French constitution, which, without exactly corresponding to the country gentlemen of England, most nearly resembled them, was a proportion of the Rural Noblesse of France, who were represented amongst the Estate of the Nobility. An edict, detaching these rural proprietors, and perhaps the inferior clergy, from their proper orders, and including their representatives in that of the Tiers État, would have

infused into the latter assembly a proportional regard for the rights of landholders, whether lay or clerical; and as they must have had a voice in those anatomical experiments, of which their property was about to become the subject, it may be supposed they would have resisted the application of the scalpel, excepting when it was unavoidably necessary. Instead of which, both the nobles and clergy came soon to be placed on the anatomical table at the mercy of each state-quack, who, having no interest in their sufferings, thought them excellent subjects on which to exemplify some favourite hypothesis.

While owners of extensive landed property were in a great measure excluded from the representation of the Third Estate, its ranks were filled from those classes which seek novelties in theory, and which are in the habit of profiting by them in practice. There were professed men of letters called thither, as they hoped and expected, to realize theories, for the greater part inconsistent with the present state of things, in which, to use one of their own choicest common-places,—« Mind had not yet acquired its due rank. » There were many of the inferior ranks of the law; for, unhappily, in this profession also the graver and more enlightened members were called by their rank to the Estate of the Noblesse. To these were

united churchmen without livings, and physicians without patients; men, whose education generally makes them important in the humble society in which they move, and who are proportionally presumptuous and conceited of their own powers, when advanced into that which is superior to their usual walk. There were many bankers also, speculators in politics, as in their natural employment of stock-jobbing; and there were intermingled with the classes we have noticed some individual nobles, expelled from their own ranks for want of character, who, like the dissolute Mirabeau, a moral monster for talents and want of principle, menaced, from the station which they had assumed, the rights of the class from which they had been expelled, and, like deserters of every kind, were willing to guide the foes, to whom they had fled, into the entrenchments of the friends whom they had forsaken, or by whom they had been exiled. There were also mixed with these perilous elements many individuals, not only endowed with talents and integrity, but possessing a respectable proportion of sound sense and judgment; but who unfortunately aided less to counteract the revolutionary tendency, than to justify it by argument, or dignify it by example. From the very beginning, the Tiers État evinced a determined purpose to annihilate in consequence,

if not in rank, the other two orders of the state, and to engross the whole power into their own hands.

It must be allowed to the Commons, that the Noblesse had possessed themselves of a paramount superiority over the middle class, totally inconsistent with the just degree of consideration due to their fellow-subjects, and irreconcilable with the spirit of enlightened times. They enjoyed many privileges which were humiliating to the rest of the nation, and others that were grossly unjust, among which must be reckoned their immunities from taxation. Assembled as an Estate of the Kingdom, they felt the *esprit-de-corps*, and, attached to the privileges of their order, showed little readiness to make the sacrifices which the times demanded, though at the risk of having what they refused to grant forcibly wrested from them. They were publicly and imprudently tenacious, when, both on principle and in policy, they should have been compliant and accommodating—for their own sake, as well as that of the sovereign. Yet let us be just to that gallant and unfortunate body of men. They possessed the courage, if not the skill or strength of their ancestors, and while we blame the violence with which they clung to useless and antiquated privileges, let us remember that these were a part of their inheritance, which no man renounces willingly,

and no man of spirit yields up to threats. If they erred in not adopting from the beginning a spirit of conciliation and concession, no body of men ever suffered so cruelly for hesitating to obey a summons, which called them to acts of such unusual self-denial.

The Clergy were no less tenacious of the privileges of the church, than the Noblesse of their peculiar feudal immunities. It had been already plainly intimated, that the property of the clerical orders ought to be subject, as well as all other species of property, to the exigencies of the state; and the philosophical opinions which had impugned their principles of faith, and rendered their persons ridiculous instead of reverend, would, it was to be feared, induce those by whom they were entertained, to extend their views to a general seizure of the whole, instead of a part, of the church's wealth.

Both the first and second Estates, therefore, kept aloof, moved by the manner in which the private interests of each stood committed, and both endeavoured to avert the coming storm, by retarding the deliberations of the States-general. They were particularly desirous to secure their individual importance as distinct orders, and appealed to ancient practice and the usage of the year 1614, by which the three several estates sat and voted in three separate bodies. But the Tiers État, who, from the be-

ginning, felt their own strength, were determined to chuse that mode of procedure by which their force should be augmented and consolidated. The double representation had rendered them equal in numbers to both the other bodies, and as they were sure of some interest among the inferior Noblesse, and a very considerable party amongst the lower Clergy, the assistance of these two minorities, added to their own numbers, must necessarily give them the superiority in every vote, providing the three chambers could be united into one.

On the other hand, the Clergy and Nobles saw that an union of this nature would place all their privileges and property at the mercy of the Commons, whom the union of the chambers in one assembly would invest with an overwhelming majority in that convocation. They had no reason to expect that this power, if once acquired, would be used with moderation; for not only had their actually obnoxious privileges been assailed by every battery of reason and of ridicule, but the records of former ages had been ransacked for ridiculous absurdities and detestable cruelties of the possessors of feudal power, all which were imputed to the present privileged classes, and mingled with many fictions of unutterable horror, devised on purpose to give a yet darker colouring to the system which it was their ob-

ject to destroy.[1] Every motive, therefore, of self-interest and self-preservation, induced the two first chambers, aware of the possession which the third had obtained over the public mind, to maintain, if possible, the specific individuality of their separate classes, and use the right hitherto supposed to be vested in them, of protecting their own interests by their own separate votes, as distinct bodies.

Others, with a deeper view, and on less selfish reasoning, saw much hazard in amalgamating the whole force of the state, saving that which remained in the crown, into one powerful body, subject to all the hasty impulses to which popular assemblies lie exposed, as lakes to the wind, and in placing the person and authority of the king in solitary and diametrical opposition to what must necessarily, in moments of enthusiasm, appear to be the will of the whole people. Such statesmen would have preferred retaining an intermediate check upon the popular counsels of the Tiers État by the other two chambers, which might, as in England, have been united into one, and would have presented an imposing front, both in point of wealth and property, and through

[1] It was, for example, gravely stated, that a seigneur of a certain province possessed a feudal right to put two of his vassals to death upon his return from hunting, and to rip their bellies open, and plunge his feet into their entrails to warm them!

the respect which, excepting under the influence of popular emotion, the people, in spite of themselves, cannot help entertaining for birth and rank. Such a body, providing the stormy temper of the times had admitted of its foundations being laid sufficiently strong, would have served as a break-water betwixt the throne and the stream-tide of popular opinion; and the monarch would have been spared the painful and perilous task of opposing himself personally, directly, and without screen or protection of any kind, to the democratical part of the constitution. Above all, by means of such an Upper House, time would have been obtained for reviewing more coolly those measures, which might have passed hastily through the assembly of Popular Representatives. It is observed in the history of innovation, that the indirect and unforeseen consequences of every great change of an existing system, are more numerous and extensive than those which had been foreseen and calculated upon, whether by those who advocated, or those who opposed the alteration. The advantages of a constitution, in which each measure of legislation must necessarily be twice deliberately argued by separate senates, acting under different impressions, and interposing, at the same time, a salutary delay, during which heats may subside, and errone-

ous views be corrected, requires no further illustration.

It must be owned, nevertheless, that there existed the greatest difficulty in any attempt which might have been made, to give weight to the Nobles as a separate chamber. The community at large looked to reforms deeply affecting the immunities of the privileged classes, as the most obvious means for the regeneration of the kingdom, and must have seen with jealousy an institution like an Upper House, which placed the parties who were principally to suffer these changes in a condition to impede, or altogether prevent them. It was naturally to be expected, that the Clergy and Nobles, united in an Upper House, must have become somewhat partial judges in the question of retrenching and limiting their own exclusive privileges; and, besides the ill-will which the Commons bore them as the possessors and assertors of rights infringing on the liberties of the people, it might be justly apprehended that, if the scourge destined for them were placed in their own hand, they might use it with the chary moderation of the squire in the romance of Cervantes. There would also have been reason to doubt that, when the nation was so much divided by factions, two Houses, so different in character and composition, could hardly have been brought to act with firmness and liberality to-

wards each other—that the one would have been ever scheming for the recovery of their full privileges, supposing they had been obliged to surrender a part of them, while the other would still look forward to the accomplishment of an entirely democratical revolution. In this way, the checks which ought to have acted merely to restrain the violence of either party, might operate as the means of oversetting the constitution which they were intended to preserve.

Still, it must be observed, that while the King retained any portion of authority, he might, with the countenance of the supposed Upper Chamber, or Senate, have balanced the progress of democracy. Difficult as the task might be, an attempt towards it ought to have been made. But, unhappily, the King's ear was successively occupied by two sets of advisers, one of whom counselled him to surrender every thing to the humour of the reformers of the state, while the other urged him to resist their most reasonable wishes;—without considering that he had to deal with those who had the power to take by force what was refused to petition. Mounier and Malouet advocated the establishment of two chambers in the Tiers État, and Necker was certainly favourable to some plan of the kind; but the Noblesse thought it called upon them for too

great a sacrifice of their privileges, though it promised to ensure what remained, while the democratical part of the Tiers État opposed it obstinately, as tending to arrest the march of the revolutionary impulse.

Five or six weeks elapsed in useless debates concerning the form in which the Estates should vote; during which period the Tiers État showed, by their boldness and decision, that they knew the advantage which they held, and were sensible that the other bodies, if they meant to retain the influence of their situation in any shape, must unite with them, on the principle according to which smaller drops of water are attracted by the larger. This came to pass accordingly. The Tiers État were joined by the whole body of inferior clergy, and by some of the nobles, and on 17th June, 1789, proceeded to constitute themselves a legislative body, exclusively competent in itself to the entire province of legislation; and, renouncing the name of the Third Estate, which reminded men they were only one out of three bodies, they adopted that of the National Assembly, and avowed themselves, not merely the third branch of the representative body, but the sole representatives of the people of France, nay, the people themselves, wielding in person the whole gigantic powers of the realm. They now

claimed the character of a constituent body, no longer limited to the task of merely requiring a redress of grievances, for which they had been originally appointed, but warranted to destroy and rebuild whatever they thought proper in the constitution of the state. It is not easy, on any ordinary principle, to see how a representation, convoked for a certain purpose, and with certain limited powers, should thus essentially alter their own character, and set themselves in such a different relation to the crown and nation, from that to which their commissions restricted them; but the National Assembly were well aware, that, in extending their powers far beyond the terms of these commissions, they only fulfilled the wishes of their constituents, and that in assuming to themselves so ample an authority, they would be supported by the whole nation, excepting the privileged orders.

The National Assembly proceeded to exercise their power with the same audacity which they had shown in assuming it. They passed a sweeping decree, by which they declared all the existing taxes to be illegal impositions, the collection of which they sanctioned only for the present, and as an interim arrangement, until they should have time to establish the financial regulations of the state upon an equal and permanent footing.

The King, acting under the advice of Necker, and fulfilling the promise made on his part by the Archbishop of Sens, his former minister, had, as we have seen, assembled the States-general; But he was not prepared for the change of the Third Estate into the National Assembly, and for the pretensions which it asserted in the latter character. Terrified, and it was little wonder, at the sudden rise of this gigantic and all-overshadowing fabric, Louis became inclined to listen to those who counselled him to combat this new and formidable authority, by opposing to it the weight of royal power; to be exercised, however, with such attention to the newly-asserted popular opinions, and with such ample surrender of the obnoxious part of the royal prerogative, as might gratify the rising spirit of freedom. For this purpose a Royal Sitting was appointed, at which the King in person was to meet the Three Estates of his kingdom, and propose a scheme which, it was hoped, might unite all parties, and tranquillize all minds. The name and form of this *Séance Royale* was perhaps not well chosen, as being too nearly allied to those of a Bed of Justice, in which the King was accustomed to exercise imperative authority over the Parliament; and the proceeding was calculated to awaken recollection of the highly unpopular Royal Sitting

of the 19th November, 1787, the displacing of Necker, and the banishment of the Duke of Orleans.

But, as if this had not been sufficient, an unhappy accident, which almost resembled a fatality, deranged this project, destroyed all the grace which might, on the King's part, have attended the measure, and, in place of it, threw the odium upon the court of having indirectly attempted the forcible dissolution of the Assembly, while it invested the members of that body with the popular character of steady patriots, whose union, courage, and presence of mind, had foiled the stroke of authority which had been aimed at their existence.

The Hall of the Commons was fixed upon for the purposes of the Royal Sitting, as the largest of the three which were occupied by the Three Estates, and workmen were employed in making the necessary arrangements and alterations. These alterations were imprudently commenced[1] before holding any communication on the subject with the National Assembly; and it was simply notified to their president Bailli, by the master of the royal ceremonies, that the King had suspended the meeting of the Assembly until the Royal Sitting should have taken place. Bailli, the president,

[1] 20th June, 1789.

well known afterwards by his tragical fate, refused to attend to an order so intimated, and the members of Assembly, upon resorting to their ordinary place of meeting, found it full of workmen, and guarded by soldiers. This led to one of the most extraordinary scenes of the Revolution.

The representatives of the nation, thus expelled by armed guards from their proper place of assemblage, found refuge in a common tennis-court, while a thunder-storm, emblem of the moral tempest which raged on the earth, poured down its terrors from the heavens. It was thus that, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and with the wretched accommodations which such a place afforded, the members of the Assembly took, and attested by their respective signatures, a solemn oath, to continue their sittings until the constitution of the country should be fixed on a solid basis. The scene was of a kind to make the deepest impression both on the actors and the spectators; although, looking back the distance of so many years, we are tempted to ask at what period the National Assembly would have been dissolved, had they adhered literally to their celebrated oath? But the conduct of the government was in every respect worthy of censure. The probability of this extraordinary occurrence might easily have been foreseen. If mere want of consi-

deration gave rise to it, the king's ministers were most culpably careless; if the closing of the hall, and suspending of the sittings of the Assembly, was intended by way of experiment upon its temper and patience, it was an act of madness, equal to that of irritating an already exasperated lion. Be this, however, as it may, the conduct of the court had the worst possible effect on the public mind, and prepared them to view with dislike and suspicion all propositions emanating from the throne; while the magnanimous firmness and unanimity of the Assembly seemed that of men determined to undergo martyrdom, rather than desert the assertion of their own rights, and those of the people.

At the Royal Sitting, which took place three days after the vow of the tennis-court, a plan was proposed by the King, offering such security for the liberty of the subject, as would a year before have been received with grateful rapture; but it was the unhappy fate of Louis XVI. neither to recede nor advance at the fortunate moment. Happy would it have been for him, for France, and for Europe, if the science of astrology, once so much respected, had in reality afforded the means of selecting lucky days. Few of his were marked with a white stone.

By the scheme which he proposed, the King renounced the power of taxation, and the right

of borrowing money, except to a trifling extent, without assent of the States-general; he invited the Assembly to form a plan for regulating *lettres de cachet*, and acknowledged the personal freedom of the subject; he provided for the liberty of the press, but not without a recommendation that some check should be placed upon its license; and he remitted to the States, as the proper authority, the abolition of the *gabelle*, and other unequal or oppressive taxes.

But all these boons availed nothing, and seemed to the people and their representatives, but a tardy and ungracious mode of resigning rights which the crown had long usurped, and only now restored when they were on the point of being wrested from its gripe. In addition to this, offence was taken at the tone and terms adopted in the royal address. The members of the Assembly conceived, that the expression of the royal will was brought forward in too imperative a form. They were offended that the King should have recommended the exclusion of spectators from the sittings of the Assembly; and much displeasure was occasioned by his declaring, thus late, their deliberations and decrees on the subject of taxes illegal. But the discontent was summed up and raised to the height by the concluding article of the royal address, in which, notwithstanding their late declarations,

and oath not to break up their sittings until they had completed a constitution for France, the King presumed, by his own sole authority, to dissolve the Estates. To conclude, Necker, upon whom alone among the ministers the popular party reposed confidence, had absented himself from the Royal Sitting, and thereby intimated his discontent with the scheme proposed.

This plan of a constitutional reformation was received with great applause by the Clergy and the Nobles, while the Third Estate listened in sullen silence. They knew little of the human mind, who supposed that the display of prerogative which had been so often successfully resisted, could influence such a body, or induce them to descend from the station of power which they had gained, and to render themselves ridiculous by rescinding the vow which they had so lately taken.

The King having, by his own proper authority, dissolved the Assembly, left the hall, followed by the Nobles and part of the Clergy; but the remaining members, who had remained silent and sullen, immediately resumed their s[illegible] The King, supposing him resolute to [illegible]t the prerogative which his own voice had but just claimed, had no alternative but that of expelling them by force, and thus supporting his order for dissolution of the Assembly; but, always halting between two

opinions, Louis employed no rougher means of removing them than a gentle summons to disperse, intimated by the royal master of ceremonies. To this officer, not certainly the most formidable satellite of arbitrary power, Mirabeau replied with energetic determination—« Slave! return to thy master, and tell him, that his bayonets alone can drive from their post the representatives of the people.»

The Assembly then proceeded to pass a decree, that they adhered to their oath taken in the tennis-court, while by another they declared that their own persons were inviolable ; and that whosoever should attempt to execute any restraint or violence upon a representative of the people, should be thereby guilty of the crime of high treason against the nation.

Their firmness, joined to the inviolability with which they had invested themselves, and the commotions which had broken out at Paris, compelled the King to give way, and renounce his purpose of dissolving the States, which continued their sittings under their new title of the National Assembly; while at different intervals, and by [illegible]nt manœuvres, the Chambers of th[illegible]y and Nobles were united with them, or, more properly, were merged and absorbed in one general body. Had that assembly been universally as pure in its intentions as we verily

believe to have been the case with many or most of its members, the French government, now lying dead at their feet, might, like the clay of Prometheus, have received new animation from their hand.

But the National Assembly, though almost unanimous in resisting the authority of the crown, and in opposing the claims of the privileged classes, was much divided respecting ulterior views, and carried in its bosom the seeds of internal dissension, and the jarring elements of at least four parties, which had afterwards their successive entrance and exit on the revolutionary stage; or rather one followed the other like successive billows, each obliterating and destroying the marks its predecessor had left on the beach.

The FIRST, and most practical division of these legislators, was the class headed by Mounier, one of the wisest, as well as one of the best and worthiest men in France, by Malouet, and others. They were patrons of a scheme at which we have already hinted, and thought France ought to look, for some of the institutions favourable to freedom, to England, whose [illegible]m had flourished so long. To transplant the British oak, with all its contorted branches and extended roots, would have been a fruitless attempt, but the infant tree of liberty might have been taught to grow after the same fashion. Modern France, like Eng-

land of old, might have retained such of her own ancient laws, forms, or regulations, as still were regarded by the nation with any portion of respect, intermingling them with such additions and alterations as were required by the liberal spirit of modern times, and the whole might have been formed on the principles of British freedom. The nation might thus, in building its own bulwarks, have profited by the plan of those which had so long resisted the tempest. It is true, the French legislature could not have promised themselves, by the adoption of this course, to form at once a perfect and entire system; but they might have secured the personal freedom of the subject, the trial by jury, the liberty of the press, and the right of granting or withholding the supplies necessary for conducting the state, —of itself the strongest of all guarantees for national freedom, and that of which, when once vested in their own representatives, the people will never permit them to be deprived. They might have adopted also other checks, balances, and controls, essential to the permanence of a free country; and having laid so strong a foundation, there would have been time to experience their use as well as their stability, and to introduce gradually such further improvements, additions, or alterations, as the state of France should appear to re-

quire, after experience of those which they had adopted.

But besides that the national spirit might be revolted (not unnaturally, however unwisely), at borrowing the essential peculiarities of their new constitution from a country which they were accustomed to consider as the natural rival of their own, there existed among the French a jealousy of the crown, and especially of the privileged classes, with whom they had been so lately engaged in political hostility, which disinclined the greater part of the Assembly to trust the King with much authority, or the Nobles with that influence which any imitation of the English constitution must have assigned to them. A fear prevailed, that whatever privileges should be left to the King or Nobles, would be so many means of attack furnished to them against the new system. Joined to this was the ambition of creating at once, and by their own united wisdom, a constitution as perfect as the armed personification of Wisdom in the heathen mythology. England had worked her way, from practical reformation of abuses, into the adoption of general maxims of government. It was reserved, thought most of the National Assembly, for France, to adopt a nobler and more intellectual course, and, by laying down abstract doctrines of public right, to deduce from these their rules of practical legislation;

—just as it is said, that in the French naval yards their vessels are constructed upon the principles of abstract mathematics, while those in England are, and were, chiefly built upon the more technical or mechanical rules. But it seems on this and other occasions to have escaped these acute reasoners, that beams and planks are subject to certain unalterable natural laws, while man is, by the various passions acting in his nature, in contradiction often to the suggestions of his understanding, as well as by the various modifications of society, liable to a thousand variations, all of which call for limitations and exceptions qualifying whatever general maxims may be adopted concerning his duties and his rights.

All such considerations were spurned by the numerous body of the new French legislature, who resolved, in imitation of Medea, to fling into their renovating kettle every existing joint and member of their old constitution, in order to its perfect and entire renovation. This mode of proceeding was liable to three great objections. *First*, that the practical inferences deduced from the abstract principle were always liable to challenge by those, who, in logical language, denied the major of the proposition, or asserted that the conclusion was irregularly deduced from the premises. *Secondly*, that the legislators, thus grounding the whole basis of their intended constitution

upon speculative political opinions, strongly resembled the tailors of Laputa, who, without condescending to take measure of their customers, like brethren of the trade elsewhere, took the girth and altitude of the person by mathematical calculation, and if the clothes did not fit, as was almost always the case, thought it ample consolation for the party concerned to be assured, that, as they worked from infallible rules of art, the error could only be occasioned by his own faulty and irregular conformation of figure. *Thirdly*, A legislature which contents itself with such a constitution as is adapted to the existing state of things, may hope to attain their end, and in presenting it to the people may be entitled to say, that, although the plan is not perfect, it partakes in that but of the nature of all earthly institutions, while it comprehends the elements of as much good as the actual state of society permits; but from the law-makers, who begin by destroying all existing enactments, and assume it as their duty entirely to renovate the constitution of a country, nothing short of absolute perfection can be accepted. They can shelter themselves under no respect to ancient prejudices which they have contradicted, or to circumstances of society which they have thrown out of consideration. They must follow up to the uttermost the principle they have adopted, and their institutions can never

be fixed or secure from the encroachments of succeeding innovators, while they retain any taint of that fallibility to which all human inventions are necessarily subject.

The majority of the French Assembly entertained, nevertheless, the ambitious view of making a constitution, corresponding in every respect to those propositions they had laid down as embracing the rights of man, which, if it should not happen to suit the condition of their country, would nevertheless be such as *ought* to have suited it, but for the irregular play of human passions, and the artificial habits acquired in an artificial state of society. But this majority differed among themselves in this essential particular, that the SECOND division of the legislature, holding that of Mounier for the first, was disposed to place at the head of their newly-manufactured government the reigning King, Louis XVI. This resolution in his favour might be partly out of regard to the long partiality of the nation to the house of Bourbon, partly out of respect for the philanthropical and accommodating character of Louis. We may conceive also, that La Fayette, bred a soldier, and Bailli, educated a magistrate, had still, notwithstanding their political creed, a natural, though unphilosophical partiality to their well-meaning and ill-fated sovereign, and a conscientious desire to relax, so far as his particular interest

was concerned, their general rule of reversing all that had previously had a political existence in France.

A THIRD faction, entertaining the same articles of political creed with La Fayette, Bailli, and others, carried them much farther, and set at defiance the scruples which limited the two first parties in their career of reformation. These last agreed with La Fayette on the necessity of reconstructing the whole government upon a new basis, without which entire innovation, they further agreed with him, that it must have been perpetually liable to the chance of a counter-revolution. But carrying their arguments farther than the Constitutional party, as the followers of Fayette, these bolder theorists pleaded the inconsistency and danger of placing at the head of their new system of reformed and regenerated government, a prince accustomed to consider himself, as by inheritance, the legitimate possessor of absolute power. They urged that, like the snake and peasant in the fable, it was impossible that the monarch and his democratical counsellors could forget, the one the loss of his power, the other the constant temptation which must beset the King to attempt its recovery. With more consistency, therefore, than the Constitutionalists, this third party of politicians became decided Republicans, determined upon

obliterating from the new constitution every name and vestige of monarchy.

The men of letters in the Assembly were, many of them, attached to this faction. They had originally been kept in the back-ground by the lawyers and mercantile part of the Assembly. Many of them possessed great talents, and were by nature men of honour and of virtue. But in great revolutions, it is impossible to resist the dizzying effect of enthusiastic feeling and excited passion. In the violence of their zeal for the liberty of France, they too frequently adopted the maxim, that so glorious an object sanctioned almost any means which could be used to attain it. Under the exaggerated influence of a mistaken patriotism, they were too apt to forget that a crime remains the same in character even when perpetrated in a public cause.[1]

[1] A singular instance of this overstrained and dangerous enthusiasm is given by Madame Roland. It being the purpose to rouse the fears and spirit of the people, and direct their animosity against the court party, Grangeneuve agreed that he himself should be murdered, by persons chosen for the purpose, in such a manner that the suspicion of the crime should attach itself to the aristocrats. He went to the place appointed, but Chabot, who was to have shared his fate, neither appeared himself, nor had made the necessary preparations for the assassination of his friend, for which Madame Roland, that high-spirited republican, dilates upon his poltroonery. Yet, what was this patriotic devotion, save a plan

It was among these ardent men that first arose the idea of forming a club, or society, to serve as a point of union for those who entertained the same political sentiments. Once united, they rendered their sittings public, combined them with affiliated societies in all parts of France, and could thus, as from one common centre, agitate the most remote frontiers with the passionate feelings which electrified the metropolis. This formidable weapon was, in process of time, wrested out of the hands of the Federalists, as the original republicans were invidiously called, by the faction who were generally termed Jacobins, from their influence in that society, and whose existence and peculiarities as a party, we have now to notice.

As yet this FOURTH, and, as it afterwards proved, most formidable party, lurked in secret among the republicans of a higher order and purer sentiments, as they, on their part, had not yet raised the mask, or ventured to declare openly against the plan of a constitutional mo-

to support a false accusation against the innocent, by an act of murder and suicide, which, if the scheme succeeded, was to lead to massacre and proscription? The same false, exaggerated, and distorted views, of the public good centring, as it seemed to them, in the establishment of a pure republic, led Barnave and others to palliate the massacres of September. Most of them might have said of the Liberty which they had worshipped, that at their death they found it an empty name.

narchy. The Jacobins were termed, in ridicule, *Les Enragés*, by the Republicans, who, seeing in them only men of a fiery disposition, and violence of deportment and declamation, vainly thought they could halloo them on, and call them off, at their pleasure. They were yet to learn, that when force is solemnly appealed to, the strongest and most ferocious, as they must be foremost in the battle, will not lose their share of the spoil, and are more likely to make the lion's partition. These Jacobins affected to carry the ideas of liberty and equality to the most extravagant lengths, and were laughed at and ridiculed in the Assembly as a sort of fanatics, too absurd to be dreaded. Their character, indeed, was too exaggerated, their habits too openly profligate, their manners too abominably coarse, their schemes too extravagantly violent, to be produced to open day, while yet the decent forms of society were observed. But they were not the less successful in gaining the lower classes, whose cause they pretended peculiarly to espouse, whose passions they inflamed by an eloquence suited to such hearers, and whose tastes they flattered by affectation of brutal manners and vulgar dress. They soon, by these arts, attached to themselves a large body of followers, violently inflamed with the prejudices which had been infused into their minds, and too boldly desperate to hesitate at any measures which should

be recommended by their demagogues. What might be the ultimate object of these men cannot be known. We can hardly give any of them credit for being mad enough to have any real patriotic feeling, however extravagantly distorted. Most probably, each had formed some vague prospect of terminating the affair to his own advantage; but in the mean time, all agreed in the necessity of sustaining the revolutionary impulse, of deferring the return of order and quiet, and of resisting and deranging any description of orderly and peaceful government. They were sensible that the return of law, under any established and regular form whatsoever, must render them as contemptible as odious, and were determined to avail themselves of the disorder while it lasted, and to snatch at and enjoy such portions of the national wreck as the tempest might throw within their individual reach.

This foul and desperate faction could not, by all the activity it used, have attained the sway which it exerted amongst the lees of the people, without possessing and exercising extensively the power of suborning inferior leaders among the populace. It has been generally asserted, that means for attaining this important object were supplied by the immense wealth of the nearest prince of the blood royal, that Duke of Orleans, whose name is so unhappily mixed with the history of this period.

By his largesses, according to the general report of historians, a number of the most violent writers of pamphlets and newspapers were pensioned, who deluged the public with false news and violent abuse. This prince, it is said, recompensed those popular and ferocious orators, who nightly harangued the people in the Palais Royal, and openly stimulated them to the most violent aggressions upon the persons and property of obnoxious individuals. From the same unhappy man's coffers were paid numbers of those who regularly attended on the debates of the Assembly, crowded the galleries to the exclusion of the public at large, applauded, hissed, exercised an almost domineering influence in the national councils, and were sometimes addressed by the representatives of the people, as if they had themselves been the people of whom they were the scum and the refuse.

Fouler accusations even than these charges were brought forward. Bands of strangers, men of wild, haggard, and ferocious appearance, whose persons the still watchful police of Paris were unacquainted with, began to be seen in the metropolis, like those obscene and ill-omened birds which are seldom visible except before a storm. All these were understood to be suborned by the Duke of Orleans and his agents, to unite with the ignorant, violent, corrupted populace of the great metropolis of

France, for the purpose of urging and guiding them to actions of terror and cruelty. The ultimate object of these manœuvres is supposed to have been a change of dynasty, which should gratify the Duke of Orleans' revenge by the deposition of his cousin, and his ambition by enthroning himself in his stead, or at least by nominating him Lieutenant of France, with all the royal powers. The most daring and unscrupulous amongst the Jacobins are said originally to have belonged to the faction of Orleans; but as he manifested a want of decision, and did not avail himself of opportunities of pushing his fortune, they abandoned their leader (whom they continued, however, to flatter and deceive), and, at the head of the partisans collected for his service, and paid from his finances, they pursued the path of their individual fortunes.

Besides the various parties which we have detailed, and which gradually developed their discordant sentiments as the Revolution proceeded, the Assembly contained the usual proportion of that prudent class of politicians who are guided by events, and who, in the days of Cromwell, called themselves « Waiters upon Providence; »—men who might boast, with the miller in the tale, that though they could not direct the course of the wind, they could adjust their sails so as to profit by it, blow from what quarter it would.

All the various parties in the Assembly, by whose division the King might, by temporizing measures, have surely profited, were united in a determined course of hostility to the crown and its pretensions, by the course which Louis XVI. was unfortunately advised to pursue. It had been resolved to assume a menacing attitude, and to place the King at the head of a strong force. Orders were given accordingly.

Necker, though approving of many parts of the proposal made to the Assembly at the royal sitting, had strongly dissented from others, and had opposed the measure of marching troops towards Versailles and Paris to overawe the capital, and, if necessary, the National Assembly. Necker received his dismission, and thus a second time the King and the people seemed to be prepared for open war. The force at first glance seemed entirely on the royal side. Thirty regiments were drawn around Paris and Versailles, commanded by Marshal Broglie, an officer of eminence, and believed to be a zealous anti-revolutionist, and a large camp formed under the walls of the metropolis. The town was open on all sides, and the only persons by whom defence could be offered were an unarmed mob; but this superiority existed only in appearance. The French guards had already united themselves, or, as the phrase then went, fraternized with the people, yielding to the various modes em-

ployed to dispose them to the popular cause; and little attached to their officers, most of whom only saw their companies upon the days of parade or duty, an apparent accident, which probably had its origin in an experiment upon the feelings of these regiments, brought the matter to'a crisis. The soldiers had been supplied secretly with means of unusual dissipation, and consequently a laxity of discipline was daily gaining ground among them. To correct this license, eleven of the guards had been committed to prison for military offences; the Parisian mob delivered them by violence, and took them under the protection of the inhabitants, a conduct which made the natural impression on their comrades. Their numbers were three thousand six hundred of the best soldiers in France, accustomed to military discipline, occupying every strong point in the city, and supported by its immense though disorderly populace.

The gaining these regiments gave the Revolutionists the command of Paris, from which the army assembled under Broglie might have found it hard to dislodge them; but these last were more willing to aid than to quell any insurrection which might take place. The modes of seduction which had succeeded with the French guards were sedulously addressed to other corps. The regiments which lay nearest o Paris were not forgotten. They were plied

with those temptations which are most powerful with soldiers—wine, women, and money, were supplied in abundance—and it was amidst debauchery and undiscipline that the French army renounced their loyalty, which used to be even too much the god of their idolatry, and which was now destroyed like the temple of Persepolis, amidst the vapours of wine, and at the instigation of courtezans. There remained the foreign troops, of which there were several regiments, but their disposition was doubtful; and to use them against the citizens of Paris, might have been to confirm the soldiers of the soil in their indisposition to the royal cause, supported as it must then have been by foreigners exclusively.

Meanwhile, the dark intrigues which had been long formed for accomplishing a general insurrection in Paris, were now ready to be brought into action. The populace had been encouraged by success in one or two skirmishes with the gens-d'armes and foreign soldiery. They had stood a skirmish with a regiment of German horse, and had been successful. The number of desperate characters who were to lead the van in these violences, was now greatly increased. Deep had called to deep, and the revolutionary clubs of Paris had summoned their confederates from among the most fiery and forward of every province. Besides troops of galley-slaves and deserters,

vagabonds of every order flocked to Paris, like ravens to the spoil. To these were joined the lowest inhabitants of a populous city, always ready for riot and rapine; and they were led on and encouraged by men who were in many instances sincere enthusiasts in the cause of liberty, and thought it could only be victorious by the destruction of the present government. The republican and Jacobin party were open in sentiment and in action, encouraging the insurrection by every means in their power. The Constitutionalists, more passive, were still rejoiced to see the storm arise, conceiving such a crisis was necessary to compel the King to place the helm of the state in their hands. It might have been expected, that the assembled force of the crown would be employed to preserve the peace at least, and prevent the general system of robbery and plunder which seemed about to ensue. They appeared not, and the citizens themselves took arms by thousands, and tens of thousands, forming the burgher militia, which was afterwards called the National Guard. The royal arsenals were plundered to obtain arms, and La Fayette was adopted the commander-in-chief of this new army, a sufficient sign that they were to embrace what was called the Constitutional party. Another large proportion of the population was hastily armed with pikes, a weapon which was thence termed Revolutionary. The Baron de Besenval, at the head of the Swiss guards,

two foreign regiments, and eight hundred horse, after an idle demonstration which only served to encourage the insurgents, retired from Paris without firing a shot, having, he says in his Memoirs, no orders how to act, and being desirous to avoid precipitating a civil war. His retreat was the signal for a general insurrection, in which the French Guard, the National Guard, and the armed mob of Paris, took the Bastille, and massacred a part of the garrison.

We are not tracing minutely the events of the Revolution, but only attempting to describe their spirit and tendency; and we may here notice two changes, which for the first time were observed to have taken place in the character of the Parisian populace.

The *Badauds de Paris*, as they were called in derision, had been hitherto viewed as a light, laughing, thoughtless race, passionately fond of news, though not very acutely distinguishing betwixt truth and falsehood, quick in adopting impressions, but incapable of forming firm and concerted resolutions, still more incapable of executing them, and so easily overawed by an armed force, that about twelve hundred police-soldiers had been hitherto sufficient to keep all Paris in subjection.* But, in the attack of the Bastille, they showed themselves daring, resolute, and unyielding, as well as prompt and headlong.

These new qualities were in some degree owing to the support which they received from the French guards; but are still more to be attributed to the loftier and more decided character belonging to the revolutionary spirit, and the mixture of men of the better classes, and of the high tone which belongs to them, among the mere rabble of the city. The garrison of this too famous castle was indeed very weak, but its deep moats, and insurmountable bulwarks, presented the most imposing show of resistance; and the triumph which the popular cause obtained in an exploit seemingly so desperate, infused a general consternation into the King and the royalists.

The second remarkable particular was that, from being one of the most light-hearted and kind-tempered of nations, the French seemed, upon the Revolution to have been animated not merely with the courage, but with the rabid fury of unchained wild beasts. Foulon and Berthier, two individuals whom they considered as enemies of the people, were put to death, with circumstances of cruelty and insult fitting only at the death-stake of a Cherokee encampment; and, in emulation of literal cannibals, there were men, or rather monsters, found, not only to tear asunder the limbs of their victims, but to eat their hearts, and drink their blood. The intensity of the new doctrines of freedom, the animosity occasioned

by civil commotion, cannot account for these atrocities, even in the lowest and most ignorant of the populace. Those who led the way in such unheard-of enormities, must have been practised murderers and assassins, mixed with the insurgents, like old hounds in a young pack, to lead them on, flesh them with slaughter, and teach an example of cruelty too easily learned, but hard to be ever forgotten. The metropolis was entirely in the hands of the insurgents, and civil war or submission was the only resource left to the sovereign. For the former course sufficient reasons might be urged. The whole proceedings in the metropolis had been entirely insurrectionary, without the least pretence of authority from the National Assembly, which continued sitting at Versailles, discussing the order of the day, while the citizens of Paris were storming castles, and tearing to pieces their prisoners, without authority from the national representatives, and even without the consent of their own civic rulers. The provost of the merchants was assassinated at the commencement of the disturbance, and a terrified committee of electors were the only persons who preserved the least semblance of authority, which they were obliged to exercise under the control and at the pleasure of the infuriated multitude. A large proportion of the citizens, though assuming arms for the protection of

themselves and their families, had no desire of employing them against the royal authority; a much larger only united themselves with the insurgents, because, in a moment of universal agitation, they were the active and predominant party. Of these the former desired peace and protection; the latter, from habit and shame, must have soon deserted the side which was ostensibly conducted by ruffians and common stabbers, and drawn themselves to that which protected peace and good order. We have too good an opinion of a people so enlightened as those of France, too good an opinion of human nature in any country, to believe that men will persist in evil, if defended in their honest and legal rights.

What, in this case, was the duty of Louis XVI.? We answer without hesitation, that which George III. of Britain proposed to himself, when, in the name of the Protestant religion, a violent and disorderly mob opened prisons, destroyed property, burned houses, and committed, though with far fewer symptoms of atrocity, the same course of disorder which now laid waste Paris. It is known that when his ministers hesitated to give an opinion in point of law concerning the employment of military force, for the protection of life and property against a disorderly banditti, the King, as chief magistrate, declared his own purpose to march into the blazing city at the

head of his guards, and with the strong hand of war to subdue the insurgents, and restore peace to the affrighted capital.[1] The same call now sounded loudly in the ear of Louis. He was still the chief magistrate of the people, whose duty it was to protect their lives and property—still commander of that army levied and paid for protecting the law of the country, and the lives and property of the subject. The King ought to have proceeded to the National Assembly without an instant's delay, cleared himself before that body of the suspicions with which calumny had loaded him, and required and commanded the assistance of the representatives of the people, to quell the frightful excesses of murder and rapine which dishonoured the capital. It is almost certain that the whole moderate party, as they were called, would have united with the nobles and the clergy. The throne was not yet empty, nor the sword unswayed. Louis had surrendered much, and might, in the course

[1] In the year 1780, from a cause apparently harmless (a petition to parliament from the protestant association), a riotous mob, composed chiefly of the lowest orders of the people, headed by Lord George Gordon, during a week kept London in the utmost alarm. The prisons of Newgate, the King's Bench, and the Fleet, were burnt, several Roman Catholic chapels, and a great number of private houses belonging to Catholics, destroyed, etc. etc. Lord George Gordon was afterwards tried for this offence. Ed.

of the change impending, have been obliged to surrender more; but he was still King of France, still bound by his coronation oath to prevent murder and put down insurrection. He could not be considered as crushing the cause of freedom, in answering a call to discharge his kingly duty; for what had the cause of reformation, proceeding as it was by the peaceful discussion of an unarmed convention, to do with the open war waged by the insurgents of Paris upon the King's troops, or with the gratuitous murders and atrocities with which the capital had been polluted? With such members as shame and fear might have brought over from the opposite side, the King, exerting himself as a prince, would have formed a majority strong enough to show the union which subsisted betwixt the Crown and the Assembly, when the protection of the laws was the point in question. With such a support—or without it—for it is the duty of the prince, in a crisis of such emergency, to serve the people, and save the country, by the exercise of his royal prerogative, whether with or without the concurrence of the other branches of the legislature,—the King, at the head of his *Gardes du Corps*, of the regiments which might have been found faithful, of the nobles and gentry, whose principles of chivalry devoted them to the service of their sovereign, ought to have marched into Paris,

and put down the insurrection by the armed hand of authority, or fallen in the attempt, like the representative of Henry IV. His duty called upon him, and the authority with which he was invested enabled him, to act this part; which, in all probability, would have dismayed the factious, encouraged the timid, decided the wavering, and, by obtaining a conquest over lawless and brute violence, would have paved the way for a moderate and secure reformation in the state.

But, having obtained this victory, in the name of the Law of the realm, the King could only be vindicated in having resorted to arms, by using his conquest with such moderation, as to show that he threw his sword into the one scale, solely in order to balance the clubs and poniards of popular insurrection, with which the other was loaded. He must then have evinced that he did not mean to obstruct the quiet course of moderation and constitutional reform, in stemming that of headlong and violent innovation. Many disputes would have remained to be settled between him and his subjects; but the process of improving the constitution, though less rapid, would have been more safe and certain, and the kingdom of France might have attained a degree of freedom equal to that which she now possesses, without passing through a brief but dreadful anarchy to long years of military de-

spotism, without the loss of mines of treasure, and without the expenditure of oceans of blood. To those who object the peril of this course, and the risk to the person of the sovereign from the fury of the insurgents, we can only answer, in the words of the elder Horatius, *Qu'il mourût.* Prince or peasant have alike lived long enough, when the choice comes to be betwixt loss of life and an important duty undischarged. Death, at the head of his troops, would have saved Louis more cruel humiliation, his subjects a deeper crime.

We do not affect to deny, that in this course there was considerable risk of another kind, and that it is very possible that the King, susceptible as he was to the influence of those around him, might have lain under strong temptation to have resumed the despotic authority, of which he had in a great measure divested himself, and have thus abused a victory gained over insurrection into a weapon of tyranny. But the spirit of liberty was so strong in France, the principles of leniency and moderation so natural to the King, his own late hazards so great, and the future, considering the general disposition of his subjects, so doubtful, that we are inclined to think a victory by the sovereign at that moment would have been followed by temperate measures. How the people used theirs is but too well known. At any rate, we have strongly stated

our opinion, that Louis would at this crisis have been justified in employing force to compel order, but that the crime would have been deep and inexpiable had he abused a victory to restore despotism.

It may be said, indeed, that the preceding statement takes too much for granted, and that the violence employed on the 14th July was probably only an anticipation of the forcible measures which might have been expected from the King against the Assembly. The answer to this is, that the successful party may always cast on the loser the blame of commencing the brawl, as the wolf punished the lamb for troubling the course of the water, though he drank lowest down the stream. But when we find one party completely prepared and ready for action, forming plans boldly, and executing them skilfully, and observe the other uncertain and unprovided, betraying all the imbecility of surprise and indecision, we must necessarily believe the attack was premeditated on the one side, and unexpected on the other.

The abandonment of thirty thousand stand of arms at the Hôtel des Invalides, which were surrendered without the slightest resistance, though three Swiss regiments lay encamped in the Champs Élysées; the totally unprovided state of the Bastille, garrisoned by about one hundred Swiss and Invalids, and without pro-

visions even for that small number; the absolute inaction of the Baron de Besenval, who,—without entangling his troops in the narrow streets, which was pleaded as his excuse,—might, by marching along the Boulevards, a passage so well calculated for the manœuvres of regular troops, have relieved the siege of that fortress;[1] and, finally, that general's bloodless retreat from Paris,—show that the King had, under all these circumstances, not only adopted no measures of a hostile character, but must, on the contrary, have issued such orders as prevented his officers from repelling force by force.

We are led, therefore, to believe, that the scheme of assembling the troops round Paris was one of those half-measures, to which, with great political weakness, Louis resorted more

[1] We have heard from a spectator who could be trusted, that, during the course of the attack on the Bastille, a cry arose among the crowd that the regiment of Royal Allemand were coming upon them. There was at that moment such a disposition to fly, as plainly showed what would have been the effect had a body of troops appeared in reality. The Baron de Besenval had commanded a body of the guards, when, some weeks previously, they subdued an insurrection in the Faubourg St Antoine. On that occasion many of the mob were killed; and he observes in his Memoirs, that, while the citizens of Paris termed him their preserver, he was very coldly received at court. He might be, therefore, unwilling to commit himself, by acting decidedly on the 14th July.

than once—an attempt to intimidate by the demonstration of force, which he was previously resolved not to use. Had his purposes of aggression been serious, five thousand troops of loyal principles—and such might surely have been selected—would, acting suddenly and energetically, have better assured him of the city of Paris, than six times that number brought to waste themselves in debauch around its walls, and to be withdrawn without the discharge of a musket. Indeed, the courage of Louis was of a passive, not an active nature, conspicuous in enduring adversity, but not of that energetic and decisive character which turns dubious affairs into prosperity, and achieves by its own exertions the success which Fortune denies.

The insurrection of Paris being acquiesced in by the sovereign, was recognized by the nation as a legitimate conquest, instead of a state crime; and the tameness of the King in enduring its violence, was assumed as a proof that the citizens had but anticipated his intended forcible measures against the Assembly, and prevented the military occupation of the city. In the debates of the Assembly itself, the insurrection was vindicated; the fears and suspicions alleged as its motives were justified as well-founded; the passions of the citizens were sympathized with, and their worst excesses palliated and excused. When the hor-

rors accompanying the murder of Berthier and Foulon were dilated upon by Lally Tolendal in the Assembly, he was heard and answered as if he had made mountains of mole-hills. Mirabeau said, that « it was a time to think, and not to feel.» Barnave asked, with a sneer, « If the blood which had been shed was so pure?» Robespierre, rising into animation with acts of cruelty fitted to call forth the interest of such a mind, observed, that « the people, oppressed for ages, had a right to the revenge of a day.»

But how long did that day last, or what was the fate of those who justified its enormities? From that hour the mob of Paris, or rather the suborned agitators by whom the actions of that blind multitude were dictated, became masters of the destiny of France. An insurrection was organized whenever there was any purpose to be carried, and the Assembly might be said to work under the impulse of the popular current, as mechanically as the wheel of a water engine is driven by a cascade.

The victory of the Bastille was extended in its consequences to the cabinet and to the legislative body. In the former, those ministers who had counselled the King to stand on the defensive against the Assembly, or rather to assume a threatening attitude, suddenly lost courage when they heard the fate of Foulon and Berthier. The Baron de Breteuil, the un-

popular successor of Necker, was deprived of his office, and driven into exile; and, to complete the triumph of the people, Necker himself was recalled by their unanimous voice.

The King came, or was conducted to, the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, in what, compared to the triumph of the minister, was a sort of ovation, in which he appeared rather as a captive than otherwise. He entered into the edifice under a vault of steel, formed by the crossed sabres and pikes of those who had been lately engaged in combating his soldiers, and murdering his subjects. He adopted the cockade of the insurrection; and, in doing so, ratified and approved of the acts done expressly against his command, acquiesced in the victory obtained over his own authority, and completed that conquest by laying down his arms.

The conquest of the Bastille was the first, almost the only appeal to arms during the earlier part of the Revolution; and the popular success, afterwards sanctioned by the monarch, showed that nothing remained save the name of the ancient government. The King's younger brother, the Comte d'Artois, now reigning King of France, had been distinguished as the leader and rallying point of the royalists. He left the kingdom with his children, and took refuge in Turin. Other distinguished princes, and many of the inferior nobility, adopted the same course, and their departure seemed to

announce to the public that the royal cause was indeed desperate, since it was deserted by those most interested in its defence. This was the first act of general emigration, and although, in the circumstances, it may be excused, yet it must still be termed a great political error. For though, on the one hand, it is to be considered, that these princes and their followers had been educated in the belief that the government of France rested in the King's person, and was identified with him; and that when the King was displaced from his permanent situation of power, the whole social system of France was totally ruined, and nothing remained which could legally govern or be governed; yet, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the instant the emigrants crossed the frontier, they at once lost all the natural advantages of birth and education, and separated themselves from the country which it was their duty to defend.

To draw to a head, and raise an insurrection for the purpose of achieving a counter-revolution, would have been the ready and natural resource. But the influence of the privileged classes was so totally destroyed, that the scheme seemed to have been considered as hopeless, even if the King's consent could have been obtained. To remain in France, whether in Paris or the departments, must have exposed them, in their avowed character of aristocrats,

to absolute assassination. It has been therefore urged, that emigration was their only resource.

But there remained for these princes, nobles, and cavaliers, a more noble task, could they but have united themselves cordially to that portion of the Assembly, originally a strong one, which professed, without destroying the existing state of monarchy in France, to wish to infuse into it the spirit of rational liberty, and to place Louis in such a situation as should have ensured him the safe and honourable station of a limited monarch, though it deprived him of the powers of a despot. It is in politics, however, as in religion—the slighter in itself the difference between two parties, the more tenacious is each of the propositions in which they disagree. The pure Royalists were so far from being disposed to coalesce with those who bleaded an attachment to monarchy with a love of liberty, that they scarce accounted them fit to share the dangors and distresses to which all were alike reduced.

This first emigration proceeded not a little perhaps on the feeling of self-consequence among those by whom it was adopted. The high-born nobles of which it was chiefly composed, had been long the WORLD, as it is termed, to Paris and to each other, and it was a natural conclusion, that their withdrawing themselves

from the sphere which they adorned, must have been felt as an irremediable deprivation. They were not aware how easily, in the hour of need, perfumed lamps are, to all purposes of utility, replaced by ordinary candles, and that, carrying away with them much of dignity, gallantry, and grace, they left behind an ample stock of wisdom and valour, and all the other essential qualities by which nations are governed and defended.

The situation and negotiations of the emigrants in the courts to which they fled, were also prejudicial to their own reputation, and consequently to the royal cause, to which they had sacrificed their country. Reduced « to show their misery in foreign lands,» they were naturally desirous of obtaining foreign aid to return to their own, and laid themselves under the heavy accusation of instigating a civil war, while Louis was yet the resigned, if not the contented, sovereign of the newly-modified empire. To this subject we must afterwards return.

The conviction that the ancient monarchy of France had fallen for ever, gave encouragement to the numerous parties which united in desiring a new constitution, although they differed on the principles on which it was to be founded. But all agreed that it was necessary, in the first place, to clear away the remains of the ancient state of things. They

resolved upon the abolition of all feudal rights, and managed the matter with so much address that it was made to appear on the part of those who held them a voluntary surrender. The debate in the National Assembly[1] was turned by the popular leaders upon the odious character of the feudal rights and privileges, as being the chief cause of the general depression and discontent in which the kingdom was involved. The Nobles understood the hint which was thus given them, and answered it with the ready courage and generosity which has been at all times the attribute of their order, though sometimes these noble qualities have been indiscreetly exercised. « Is it from us personally that the nation expects sacrifices? » said the Marquis de Foucault; « be assured that you shall not appeal in vain to our generosity. We are desirous to defend to the last the rights of the monarchy, but we can be lavish of our peculiar and personal interests. »

The same general sentiment pervaded at once the Clergy and Nobles, who, sufficiently sensible that what they resigned could not operate essentially to the quiet of the state, were yet too proud to have even the appearance of placing their own selfish interests in competition with the public welfare. The

[1] 4th August, 1789.

whole privileged classes seemed at once seized with a spirit of the most lavish generosity, and hastened to despoil themselves of all their peculiar immunities and feudal rights. Clergy and laymen vied with each other in the nature and extent of their sacrifices. Privileges, whether prejudicial or harmless, rational or ridiculous, were renounced in the mass. A sort of delirium pervaded the Assembly; each member strove to distinguish the sacrifice of his personal claims by something more remarkable than had yet attended any of the previous renunciations. They who had no rights of their own to resign, had the easier and more pleasant task of surrendering those of their constituents: the privileges of corporations, the monopolies of crafts, the rights of cities, were heaped on the national altar; and the members of the National Assembly seemed to look about in ecstasy, to consider of what else they could despoil themselves and others, as if, like the silly old earl in the civil dissensions of England, there had been an actual pleasure in the act of renouncing.[1] The feudal

[1] « Is there nothing else we can renounce?» said the old Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, in the time of the Commonwealth, after he had joined in renouncing Church and King, Crown and Law. « Can no one think of any thing else? I love RENOUNCING.» The hasty renunciations of the French nobles and churchmen were brought about in the manner practised of yore in convivial parties, when

rights were in many instances odious, in others oppressive, and in others ridiculous; but it was ominous to see the institutions of ages overthrown at random, by a set of men talking and raving all at once, so as to verify the observation of the Englishman, Williams, one of their own members, « The fools! they would be thought to deliberate, when they cannot even listen.» The singular occasion on which enthusiasm, false shame, and mutual emulation, thus induced the Nobles and Clergy to despoil themselves of all their seigniorial rights, was called by some the *day of the sacrifices*, by others, more truly, the *day of the dupes*.

During the currency of this legislative frenzy, as it might be termed, the popular party, with countenances affecting humility and shame at having nothing themselves to surrender, sat praising each new sacrifice, as the wily companions of a thoughtless and generous young man applaud the lavish expense by which they themselves profit, while their seeming admiration is an incentive to new acts of extravagance.

At length, when the sacrifice seemed com-

he who gave a toast burned his wig, had a loose tooth drawn, or made some other sacrifice, which, according to the laws of compotation, was an example necessary to be imitated by all the rest of the company, with whatever prejudice to their wardrobe or their persons.

plete, they began to pause and look around them. Some one thought of the separate distinctions of the provinces of France, as Normandy, Languedoc, and so forth. Most of these provinces possessed rights and privileges acquired by victory or treaty, which even Richelieu had not dared to violate. As soon as mentioned, they were at once thrown into the revolutionary smelting-pot, to be re-modelled after the universal equality which was the fashion of the day. It was not urged, and would not have been listened to, that these rights had been bought with blood, and sanctioned by public faith; that the legislature, though it had a right to extend them to others, could not take them from the possessors without compensation; and it escaped the Assembly no less, how many honest and generous sentiments are connected with such provincial distinctions, which form, as it were, a second and inner fence around the love of a common country; or how much harmless enjoyment the poor man derives from the consciousness that he shares the privileges of some peculiar district. Such considerations might have induced the legislature to pause at least, after they had removed such marks of distinction as tended to engender jealousy betwixt inhabitants of the same kingdom. But the revolutionary level was to be passed over all that

tended to distinguish one district, or one individual from another.

There was one order in the kingdom which, although it had joined largely and readily in the sacrifices of *the day of dupes*, was still considered as indebted to the state, and was doomed to undergo an act of total spoliation. The Clergy had agreed, and the Assembly had decreed, on 4th August, that the tithes should be declared redeemable, at a moderate price, by the proprietors subject to pay them. This regulation ratified, at least, the legality of the Clergy's title. Nevertheless, in violation of the public faith thus pledged, the Assembly, three days afterwards, pretended that the surrender of tithes had been absolute, and that, in lieu of that supposed revenue, the nation was only bound to provide decently for the administration of divine worship. Even the Abbé Siéyes on this occasion deserted the revolutionary party, and made an admirable speech against this iniquitous measure. « You would be free, » he exclaimed, with vehemence, « and you know not how to be just! » A curate in the assembly, recalling to mind the solemn invocation by which the Tiers État had called upon the clergy to unite with them, asked, with similar energy, « Was it to rob us, that you invited us to join with you in the name of the God of Peace? » Mirabeau, on the other hand, forgot the vehe-

mence with which he had pleaded the right of property inherent in religious bodies, and lent his sophistry to defend what his own reasoning had proved in a similar case to be indefensible. The complaints of the Clergy were listened to in contemptuous silence, or replied to with bitter irony, by those who were conscious how little sympathy that body were likely to meet from the nation in general, and who therefore spoke «as having power to do wrong.»

We must now revert to the condition of the kingdom of France at large, while her ancient institutions were crumbling to pieces of themselves, or were forcibly pulled down by state innovators. That fine country was ravaged by a civil war of aggravated horrors, waged betwixt the rich and poor, and marked by every species of brutal violence. The peasants, their minds filled with a thousand wild suppositions, and incensed by the general scarcity of provisions, were everywhere in arms, and everywhere attacked the chateaux of their *Seigneurs*, whom they were incited to look upon as enemies of the Revolution, and particularly of the commons. In most instances they were successful, and burnt the dwellings of the nobility, practising all the circumstances of rage and cruelty to which the minds of barbarians are influenced. Men were murdered in presence of their wives;

wives and daughters violated before the eyes of their husbands and parents; some were put to death by lingering tortures; others by sudden and general massacre. Against some of these unhappy gentlemen, doubtless, the peasants might have wrongs to remember and to avenge; many of them, however, had borne their faculties so meekly that they did not even suspect the ill intentions of these peasants, until their castles and country-seats kindled with the general conflagration, and made part of the devouring element which raged through the whole kingdom.

What were the National Assembly doing at this dreadful crisis? They were discussing the abstract doctrines of the rights of man, instead of exacting from the subject the respect due to his social duties.

Yet a large party in the Convention, and who had hitherto led the way in the paths of the Revolution, now conceived that the goal was attained, and that it was time to use the curb and forbear the spur. Such was the opinion of La Fayette and his followers, who considered the victory over the Royalists as complete, and were desirous to declare the Revolution ended, and erect a substantial form of government on the ruins of monarchy, which lay prostrate at their feet.

They had influence enough in the Assembly to procure a set of resolutions, declaring the

monarchy hereditary in the person of the King and present family, on which basis they proceeded to erect what might be termed a Royal Democracy, or, in plainer terms, a Republic, governed, in truth, by a popular assembly, but encumbered with the expense of a king, to whom they desired to leave no real power, or free will to exercise it, although his name was to remain in the front of edicts, and although he was still to be considered entitled to command their armies, as the executive authority of the state.

A struggle was made to extend the royal authority to an absolute negative upon the decrees of the representative body; and though it was limited by the jealousy of the popular party to a suspensive veto only, yet even this degree of influence was supposed too dangerous in the hands of a monarch who had but lately been absolute. There is indeed an evident dilemma in the formation of a democracy, with a king for its ostensible head. Either the monarch will remain contented with his daily parade and daily food, and thus play the part of a mere pageant, in which case he is a burthensome expense to the state, which a popular government, in prudent economy, as well as from the severity of principle assumed by republicans, are particularly bound to avoid; or else he will naturally endeavour to improve the shadow and outward form of

power into something like sinew and substance, and the democracy will be unexpectedly assailed with the spear which they desired should be used only as their standard pole.

To these reasonings many of the Deputies would perhaps have answered, had they spoken their real sentiments, that it was yet too early to propose to the French a pure republic, and that it was necessary to render the power of the King insignificant, before abolishing a title to which the public ear had been so long accustomed. In the mean time they took care to divest the monarch of whatever protection he might have received from an intermediate senate, or chamber, placed betwixt the King and the National Assembly. « One God, » exclaimed Rabaud St Etienne, « one Nation, one King, and one Chamber. » This advocate for unity at once and uniformity, would scarce have been listened to if he had added, « one nose, one tongue, one arm, and one eye ; » but his first concatenation of unities formed a phrase ; and an imposing phrase, which sounds well, and can easily be repeated, has immense force in a revolution. The proposal for a Second or Upper Chamber, whether hereditary like that of England, or conservative like that of America, was rejected as aristocratical. Thus the King of France was placed in respect to the populace, as Canute of old to the advanc-

ing tide—he was entitled to sit on his throne and command the waves to respect him, and take the chance of their obeying his commands, or of being overwhelmed by them. If he was designed to be an integral part of the constitution, this should not have been—if he was considered as something that it was more seemly to abandon to his fate than to destroy by violence, the plan was not ill concerted.

CHAPTER V.

Plan of the Democrats to bring the King and Assembly to Paris.—Banquet of the *Gardes du Corps*.—Riot at Paris—A formidable Mob of Women assemble to march to Versailles—The National Guard refuse to act against the Insurgents, and demand also to be led to Versailles—The Female Mob arrive—Their behaviour to the Assembly—to the King—Alarming Disorders at Night—La Fayette arrives with the National Guard—Mob force the Palace—Murder the Body Guards—The Queen's safety endangered—Fayette's arrival with his Force restores Order.—King and Royal Family obliged to go to reside at Paris.—Description of the Procession—This Step agreeable to the Views of the Constitutionalists, and of the Republicans, and of the Anarchists.—Duke of Orleans sent to England.

We have mentioned the various restrictions upon the royal authority, which had been successively sanctioned by the National Assembly. But the various factions, all of which tended to democracy, were determined upon manœuvres for abating the royal authority, more actively powerful than those which the Assembly dared yet to venture upon. For this purpose, all those who desired to carry the Revolution to extremity, became desirous to bring the sittings of the National Assembly

and the residence of the King within the precincts of Paris, and to place them under the influence of that popular frenzy which they had so many ways of exciting, and which might exercise the authority of terror over the body of representatives, fill their galleries with a wild and tumultuous band of partisans, surround their gates with an infuriated populace, and thus dictate the issue of each deliberation. What fate was reserved for the King, after incidents will sufficiently show. To effect an object so important, the republican party strained every effort, and succeeded in raising the popular ferment to the highest pitch.

Their first efforts were unsuccessful. A deputation, formidable from their numbers and clamorous violence, was about to sally from Paris to petition, as they called it, for the removal of the royal family and National Assembly to Paris, but was dispersed by the address of La Fayette and Bailli. Nevertheless it seemed decreed that the republicans should carry their favourite measures, less through their own proper strength, great as that was, than by the advantage afforded by the blunders of the royalists. An imprudence—it seems to deserve no harsher name—which occurred within the precincts of the royal palace at Versailles, gave the demagogues an opportunity, sooner probably than they expected, of

carrying their point by a repetition of the violences which had already occurred.

The town of Versailles owed its splendour and wealth entirely to its being the royal residence, yet abounded with a population singularly ill-disposed towards the King and royal family. The National Guard of the place, amounting to some thousands, were animated by the same feelings. There were only about four hundred *Gardes du Corps*, or Life-guards,* upon whom reliance could be placed for the defence of the royal family, in case of any popular tumult either in Versailles itself, or directed thither from Paris. These troops consisted of gentlemen of trust and confidence, but their numbers were few in proportion to the extent of the palace, and their very quality rendered them obnoxious to the people as armed aristocrats.

About two-thirds of their number, to avoid suspicion and gain confidence, had been removed to Rambouillet. In these circumstances, the grenadiers of the French guards, so lately in arms against the royal authority, with an inconsistency not unnatural to men of their profession, took it into their heads to become zealous for recovery of the posts which they had formerly occupied around the King's person, and threatened openly to march to Versailles to take possession of the routine of duty at the palace, a privilege which they

considered as their due, notwithstanding that they had deserted their posts against the King's command, and were now about to resume them contrary to his consent. The regiment of Flanders was brought up to Versailles, to prevent a movement fraught with so much danger to the royal family. The presence of this corps had been required by the municipality, and the measure had been acquiesced in by the Assembly, though not without some expressive indications of suspicion.

The regiment of Flanders arrived accordingly, and the *Gardes du Corps*, according to a custom universal in the French garrisons, invited the officers to an entertainment, at which the officers of the Swiss guards, and those of the National Guard of Versailles, were also guests. This ill-omened feast was given in the Opera Hall of the palace, almost within hearing of the sovereigns;[1] the healths of the royal family were drank with the enthusiasm naturally inspired by the situation. The King and Queen imprudently agreed to visit the scene of festivity, carrying with them the Dauphin. Their presence raised the spirits of the company, already excited by wine and music, to the highest pitch; royalist tunes were played, the white cockade, distributed by the ladies who attended the Queen, was

[1] October 1st. Ed.

mounted with enthusiasm, and it is said that of the nation was trodden under foot.

If we consider the cause of this wild scene, it seems natural enough that the Queen, timid as a woman, anxious as a wife and a mother, might, in order to propitiate the favour of men who were summoned expressly to be guard of the royal family, incautiously have recourse to imitate, in a slight degree, and towards one regiment, the arts of conciliation, which in a much grosser shape had been used by the popular party to shake the fidelity of the whole army. But it is impossible to conceive that the King, or ministers, could have hoped, by the transitory and drunken flash of enthusiasm elicited from a few hundred men during a carousal, to commence the counter-revolution, which they dared not attempt when they had at their command thirty thousand troops, under an experienced general.

But as no false step among the royalists remained unimproved by their adversaries, the military feast of Versailles was presented to the people of Paris under a light very different from that in which it must be viewed by posterity. The Jacobins were the first to sound the alarm through all their clubs and societies, and the hundreds of hundreds of popular orators whom they had at their command, excited the citizens by descriptions of the most dreadful plots, fraught with massacres and

proscriptions. Every effort had already been used to heat the popular mind against the King and Queen, whom, in allusion to the obnoxious power granted to them by the law, they had of late learned to curse and insult, under the names of Monsieur and Madame Veto. The King had recently delayed yielding his sanction to the declarations of the Rights of Man, until the Constitution was complete. This had been severely censured by the Assembly, who spoke of sending a deputation, to extort his consent to these declarations, before presenting him with the practical results which they intended to bottom on them. A dreadful scarcity, amounting nearly to a famine, rendered the populace even more accessible than usual to desperate counsels. The feasts, amid which the aristocrats were represented as devising their plots, seemed an insult on the public misery. When the minds of the lower orders were thus prejudiced, it was no difficult matter to produce an insurrection.

That of the 5th October, 1789, was of a singular description, the insurgents being chiefly of the female sex. The market-women, *Dames de la Halle*, as they are called, half unsexed by the masculine nature of their employments, and entirely so by the ferocity of their manners, had figured early in the Revolution. With these were allied and associated most

of the worthless and barbarous of their own sex, such disgraceful specimens of humanity as serve but to show in what a degraded state it may be found to exist. Females of this description began to assemble early in the morning, in large groups, with the cries for « bread, » which so easily rouse a starving metropolis. There were observed amongst them many men disguised as women, and they compelled all the females they met to go along with them. They marched to the Hôtel de Ville, broke boldly through several squadrons of the National Guard, who were drawn up in front of that building for its defence, and were with difficulty dissuaded from burning the records it contained. They next seized a magazine of arms, with three or four pieces of cannon, and were joined by a miscellaneous rabble, armed with pikes, scythes, and similar instruments, who called themselves the conquerors of the Bastille. The still increasing multitude re-echoed the cry of « Bread, bread!—to Versailles! to Versailles! »

The National Guard were now called out in force, but speedily showed their officers that they too were infected with the humour of the times, and as much indisposed to subordination as the mob, to disperse which they were summoned. La Fayette put himself at their head, not to give his own, but to receive their orders. They refused to act against women,

who, they said, were starving, and in their turn demanded to be led to Versailles, to dethrone,—such was their language,—« the King, who was a driveller, and place the crown on the head of his son.» La Fayette hesitated, implored, explained; but he had as yet to learn the situation of a revolutionary general. « Is it not strange,» said one of his soldiers, who seemed quite to understand the military relation of officer and private on such an occasion, « is it not strange that La Fayette pretends to command the people, when it is his part to receive orders from them?»

Soon afterwards an order arrived from the Assembly of the Commune of Paris, enjoining the commandant's march, upon his own report that it was impossible to withstand the will of the people. He marched accordingly in good order, and at the head of a large force of the National Guard, about four or five hours after the departure of the mob, who, while he waited in a state of indecision, were already far on their way to Versailles.

It does not appear that the King, or his ministers, had any information of these hostile movements. Assuredly, there could not have been a royalist in Paris willing to hazard a horse or a groom to carry such intelligence, where the knowledge of it must have been so important. The leading members of the Assembly, assembled at Versailles, were better

informed. «These gentlemen,» said Barbantanne, looking at the part of the hall where the nobles and clergy usually sat, «wish more light—they shall have lanterns,[1] they may rely upon it.» Mirabeau went behind the chair of Mounier, the president. «Paris is marching upon us,» he said.—«I know not what you mean,» said Mounier.—«Believe me or not, all Paris is marching upon us—dissolve the sitting.»—«I never hurry the deliberations,» said Mounier. — «Then feign illness,» said Mirabeau,—«go to the palace, tell them what I say, and give me for authority. But there is not a minute to lose—Paris marches upon us.» —«So much the better,» answered Mounier; «we will be a republic the sooner.»[2]

Shortly after this singular dialogue, occasioned probably by a sudden movement, in

[1] In the beginning of the Revolution, when the mob executed their pleasure on the individuals against whom their suspicions were directed, the lamp-irons served for gibbets, and the lines by which the lamps, or lanterns, were disposed across the street, were ready halters. Hence the cry of « *Les Aristocrates à la lanterne.*» The answer of the Abbé Maury is well known. «*Eh! mes amis, quand vous m'aurez mis à la lanterne, est-ce que vous y verrez plus clair?*»

[2] Mounier must be supposed to speak ironically, and in allusion, not to his own opinions, but to Mirabeau's revolutionary tenets. Another account of this singular conversation states his answer to have been, «All the better. If the mob kill all of us—remark, I say *all* of us, it will be the better for the country.»

which Mirabeau showed the aristocratic feelings from which he never could shake himself free, the female battalion, together with their masculine allies, continued their march uninterruptedly, and entered Versailles in the afternoon, singing patriotic airs, intermingled with blasphemous obscenities, and the most furious threats against the Queen. Their first visit was to the National Assembly, where the beating of drums, shouts, shrieks, and a hundred confused sounds, interrupted the deliberations. A man called Maillard, brandishing a sword in his hand, and supported by a woman holding a long pole, to which was attached a tambour de basque, commenced a harangue in the name of the sovereign people. He announced that they wanted bread; that they were convinced the ministers were traitors; that the arm of the people was uplifted, and about to strike;—with much to the same purpose, in the exaggerated eloquence of the period. The same sentiments were echoed by his followers, mingled with the bitterest threats, against the Queen in particular, that fury could contrive, expressed in language of the most energetic brutality.

The Amazons then crowded into the Assembly, mixed themselves with the members, occupied the seat of the president, of the secretaries, produced or procured victuals and wine, drank, sung, swore, scolded, screamed,

—abused some of the members, and loaded others with their loathsome caresses.

A deputation of these madwomen was at length sent to St Priest, the minister, a determined royalist, who received them sternly, and replied, to their demand of bread, «When you had but one king, you never wanted bread—you have now twelve hundred—go ask it of them.» They were introduced to the King, however, and were so much struck with the kind interest which he took in the state of Paris, that their hearts relented in his favour, and the deputies returned to their constituents, shouting *Vive le Roi!*

Had the tempest depended on the mere popular breeze, it might now have been lulled to sleep; but there was a secret ground-swell, a heaving upwards of the bottom of the abyss, which could not be conjured down by the awakened feelings or convinced understandings of the deputation. A cry was raised that the deputies had been bribed to represent the King favourably; and, in this humour of suspicion, the army of Amazons stripped their garters, for the purpose of strangling their own delegates. They had by this time ascertained, that neither the National Guard of Versailles, nor the regiment of Flanders, whose transitory loyalty had passed away with the fumes of the wine of the banquet, would oppose them by force, and that they had only to deal with the

Gardes du Corps, who dared not to act with vigour, lest they should provoke a general attack on the palace, while the most complete distraction and indecision reigned within its precincts. Bold in consequence, the female mob seized on the exterior avenues of the palace, and threatened destruction to all within.

The attendants of the King saw it necessary to take measures for the safety of his person, but they were marked by indecision and confusion. A force was hastily gathered of two or three hundred gentlemen, who, it was proposed, should mount the horses of the royal stud, and escort the King to Rambouillet, out of this scene of confusion.[1] The *Gardes du Corps*, with such assistance, might certainly have forced their way through a mob of the tumultuary description which surrounded them; and the escape of the King from Ver-

[1] This was proposed by that Marquis de Favras, whose death upon the gallows for a royalist plot, gave afterwards such exquisite delight to the citizens of Paris. Being the first man of quality whom they had seen hanged (that punishment having been hitherto reserved for plebeians), they encored the performance, and would fain have hung him up a second time. The same unfortunate gentleman had previously proposed to secure the bridge at Sêvres with a body of cavalry, which would have prevented the women from advancing to Versailles. The Queen signed an order for the horses with this remarkable clause.—« To be used if the King's safety is endangered, but in no danger which affects me only.»

sailles, under circumstances so critical, might have had a great effect in changing the current of popular feeling. But those opinions prevailed, which recommended that he should abide the arrival of La Fayette with the civic force of Paris.

It was now night, and the armed rabble of both sexes showed no intention of departing or breaking up. On the contrary, they bivouacked after their own manner upon the parade, where the soldiers usually mustered. There they kindled large fires, ate, drank, sang, caroused, and occasionally discharged their fire-arms. Scuffles arose from time to time, and one or two of the *Gardes du Corps* had been killed and wounded in the quarrel, which the rioters had endeavoured to fasten on them; besides which, this devoted corps had sustained a volley from their late guests, the National Guard of Versailles. The horse of a *Garde du Corps*, which fell into the hands of these female demons, was killed, torn in pieces, and eaten half raw and half roasted. Every thing seemed tending to a general engagement, when, late at night, the drums announced the approach of La Fayette at the head of his civic army, which moved slowly but in good order.

The presence of this great force seemed to restore a portion of tranquillity, though no one seemed to know with certainty how it was likely to act. La Fayette had an audience of

the King, explained the means he had adopted for the security of the palace, recommended to the inhabitants to go to rest, and unhappily set the example by retiring himself. Before doing so, however, he also visited the Assembly, pledged himself for the safety of the royal family and the tranquillity of the night, and, with some difficulty, prevailed on the President Mounier to adjourn the sitting, which had been voted permanent. He thus took upon himself the responsibility for the quiet of the night. We are loath to bring into question the worth, honour, and fidelity of La Fayette; and we can therefore only lament, that weariness should have so far overcome him at an important crisis, and that he should have trusted to others the execution of those precautions, which were most grossly neglected.

A band of the rioters found means to penetrate into the palace about three in the morning, through a gate which was left unlocked and unguarded. They rushed to the Queen's apartment, and bore down the few *Gardes du Corps* who hastened to her defence. The sentinel knocked at the door of her bed-chamber, called to her to escape, and then gallantly exposed himself to the fury of the murderers. His single opposition was almost instantly overcome, and he himself left for dead. Over his bleeding body they forced their way into the Queen's apartment; but their victim, re-

served for farther and worse woes, had escaped by a secret passage into the chamber of the King, while the assassins, bursting in, stabbed the bed she had just left with pikes and swords.[1]

The *Gardes du Corps* assembled in what was called the *Œil de Bœuf*, and endeavoured there to defend themselves; but several, unable to gain this place of refuge, were dragged down into the court-yard, where a wretch, distinguished by a long beard, a broad bloody axe, and a species of armour which he wore on his person, had taken on himself, by taste and choice, the office of executioner. The strangeness of the villain's costume, the san-

[1] One of the most accredited calumnies against the unfortunate Marie Antoinette pretends, that she was on this occasion surprised in the arms of a paramour. Buonaparte is said to have mentioned this as a fact, upon the authority of Madame Campan. We have now Madame Campan's own account, describing the conduct of the Queen on this dreadful occasion as that of a heroine, and totally excluding the possibility of the pretended anecdote. But let it be farther considered, under what circumstances the Queen was placed—at two in the morning, retired to a privacy liable to be interrupted (as it was) not only by the irruption of the furious banditti who surrounded the palace, demanding her life, but by the entrance of the King, or of others, in whom circumstances might have rendered the intrusion duty; and let it then be judged whether the dangers of the moment, and the risk of discovery, would not have prevented Messalina herself from chusing such a time for an assignation.

guinary relish with which he discharged his office, and the hoarse roar with which from time to time he demanded new victims, made him resemble some demon whom hell had vomited forth, to augment the wickedness and horror of the scene.[1]

Two of the *Gardes du Corps* were already beheaded, and the Man with the Beard was clamorous to do his office upon the others who had been taken, when La Fayette, roused from his repose, arrived at the head of a body of grenadiers of the old French guards, who had been lately incorporated with the civic guard, and were probably the most efficient part of his force. He did not think of avenging the unfortunate gentlemen who lay murdered before his eyes for the discharge of their military duty, but he entreated his soldiers to save him the dishonour of breaking his word, which he had pledged to the King, that he would protect the *Gardes du Corps*. It is probable he attempted no more than was in his power, and so far acted wisely, if not generously.

[1] The miscreant's real name was Jourdan, afterwards called *Coupe-tête*, distinguished in the massacres of Avignon. He gained his bread by sitting as an academy-model to painters, and for that reason cultivated his long beard. In the depositions before the Châtelet, he is called *L'homme à la barbe*,—an epithet which might distinguish the ogre or goblin of some ancient legend.

To redeem Monsieur de la Fayette's pledge, the grenadiers did, what they ought to have done in the name of the King, the law, the nation, and insulted humanity,—they cleared, and with perfect ease, the court of the palace from these bands of murderous bacchantes, and their male associates. The instinct of ancient feelings was in some degree awakened in the grenadiers. They experienced a sudden sensation of compassion and kindness for the *Gardes du Corps*, whose duty on the royal person they had in former times shared. There arose a cry among them,—« Let us save the *Gardes du Corps*, who saved us at Fontenoy.» They took them under their protection, exchanged their caps with them in sign of friendship and fraternity, and a tumult, which had something of the character of joy, succeeded to that which had announced nothing but blood and death.

The outside of the palace was still besieged by the infuriated mob, who demanded, with hideous cries, and exclamations the most barbarous and obscene, to see the Austrian, as they called the Queen. The unfortunate Princess appeared on the balcony with one of her children in each hand. A voice from the crowd called out, «No children!» as if on purpose to deprive the mother of that appeal to humanity, which might move the hardest heart. Marie Antoinette, with a force of

mind worthy of Maria Theresa, her mother, pushed her children back into the room, and, turning her face to the tumultuous multitude, which tossed and roared beneath, brandishing their pikes and guns with the wildest attitudes of rage, the reviled, persecuted, and denounced Queen stood before them, her arms folded on her bosom, with a noble air of courageous resignation. The secret reason of this summons—the real cause of repelling the children—could only be to afford a chance of some desperate hand among the crowd executing the threats which resounded on all sides. Accordingly, a gun was actually levelled, but one of the bystanders struck it down; for the passions of the mob had taken an opposite turn, and, astonished at Marie Antoinette's noble presence, and graceful firmness of demeanour, there arose, almost in spite of themselves, a general shout of *Vive la Reine!* [1]

But if the insurgents, or rather those who prompted them, missed their first point, they did not also lose their second. A cry arose, « To Paris! » at first uttered by a solitary voice, but gathering strength, until the whole multitude shouted, « To Paris—to Paris! » The cry of these blood-thirsty bacchanals, such as they had that night shown themselves, was, it

[1] Mémoires de Weber, vol. II. p. 457.

seems, considered as the voice of the people, and as such, La Fayette neither remonstrated himself, nor permitted the King to interpose a moment's delay in yielding obedience to it; nor was any measure taken to put some appearance even of decency, on the journey, or to disguise its real character, of a triumphant procession of the sovereign people, after a complete victory over their nominal monarch.

The carriages of the royal family were placed in the middle of an immeasurable column, consisting partly of La Fayette's soldiers, partly of the revolutionary rabble whose march had preceded his, amounting to several thousand men and women of the lowest and most desperate description, intermingling in groups amongst the bands of French guards, and civic soldiers, whose discipline could not enable them to preserve even a semblance of order. Thus they rushed along, howling their songs of triumph. The harbingers of the march bore the two bloody heads of the murdered *Gardes du Corps* paraded on pikes, at the head of the column, as the emblems of their prowess and success.[1] The rest of this body, worn down by fatigue, most of them despoiled of their arms, and many without

[1] It has been said they were borne immediately before the royal carriage; but this is an exaggeration where exaggeration is unnecessary. These bloody trophies preceded the royal family a great way on the march to Paris.

hats, anxious for the fate of the royal family, and harassed with apprehensions for themselves, were dragged like captives in the midst of the mob, while the drunken females around them bore aloft in triumph their arms, their belts, and their hats. These wretches, stained with the blood in which they had bathed themselves, were now singing songs, of which the burthen bore,—« We bring you the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice;» as if the presence of the *unhappy* royal family, with the little power they now possessed, had been in itself a charm against scarcity. Some of these Amazons rode upon the cannon, which made a formidable part of the procession. Many of them were mounted on the horses of the *Gardes du Corps*, some in masculine fashion, others *en croupe*. All the muskets and pikes which attended this immense cavalcade were garnished, as if in triumph, with oak-boughs, and the women carried long poplar-branches in their hands, which gave the column, so grotesquely composed in every respect, the appearance of a moving grove. Scarce a circumstance was omitted which could render this entrance into the capital more insulting to the King's feelings—more degrading to the royal dignity.

After six hours of dishonour and agony, the unfortunate Louis was brought to the Hôtel-de-Ville, where Bailli, then mayor, compli-

mented him upon the « *beau jour,* » the « splendid day, » which restored the monarch of France to his capital; assured him that order, peace, and all the gentler virtues, were about to revive in the country under his royal eye, and that the King would henceforth become powerful through the people, the people happy through the King; and « what was truest of all, » that as Henry IV. had entered Paris by means of reconquering his people, Louis XVI. had done so, because his people had reconquered their King.[1] His wounds salved with this lip-comfort, the unhappy and degraded Prince was permitted to retire to the palace of the Tuileries, which, long uninhabited, and almost unfurnished, yawned upon him like the tomb where alone he at length found repose.

The events of the 14th July, 1789, when the Bastille was taken, formed the first great stride of the Revolution, actively considered. Those of the 5th and 6th of October, in the

[1] *Mémoires de Bailli. Choix de ses Lettres et Discours.* The Mayor of Paris, although such language must have sounded like the most bitter irony, had no choice of words on the 6th October, 1789. But if he seriously termed that a glorious day, what could Bailli complain of the studied insults and cruelties which he himself sustained, when, in October, 1792, the same banditti of Paris, who forced the King from Versailles, dragged himself to death, with every circumstance of refined cruelty and protracted insult?

same year, which we have detailed at length, as peculiarly characteristic of the features which it assumed, made the second grand phasis. The first had rendered the inhabitants of the metropolis altogether independent of their sovereign, and indeed of any government but that which they chose to submit to; the second deprived the King of that small appearance of freedom which he had hitherto exercised, and fixed his dwelling in the midst of his metropolis, independent and self-regulated as we have described it. « It is wonderful, » said Louis, « that with such love of liberty on all sides, I am the only person that is deemed totally unworthy of enjoying it. » Indeed, after the march from Versailles, the King could only be considered as the signet of royal authority, used for attesting public acts at the pleasure of those in whose custody he was detained, but without the exercise of any free-will on his own part.

All the various parties found their account, less or more, in this state of the royal person, excepting the pure royalists, whose effective power was little, and their comparative numbers few. There remained, indeed, attached to the person and cause of Louis, a party of those members, who, being friends to freedom, were no less so to regulated monarchy, and who desired to fix the throne on a firm and determined basis. But their numbers were

daily thinned, and their spirits were broken. The excellent Mounier, and the eloquent Lally Tolendal, emigrated after the 9th October, unable to endure the repetition of such scenes as were then exhibited. The indignant adieus of the latter to the National Assembly were thus forcibly expressed :—

« It is impossible for me, even my physical strength alone considered, to discharge my functions amid the scenes we have witnessed. —Those heads borne in trophy; that Queen half assassinated; that King dragged into Paris by troops of robbers and assassins; the 'splendid day' of Monsieur Bailli; the jest of Barnave, when blood was floating around us; Mounier escaping, as if by miracle, from a thousand assassins; these are the causes of my oath never again to enter that den of cannibals. A man may endure a single death; he may brave it more than once, when the loss of life can be useful—but no power under Heaven shall induce me to suffer a thousand tortures every passing minute—while I am witnessing the progress of cruelty—the triumph of guilt—which I must witness without interrupting it. They may proscribe my person—they may confiscate my fortune—I will labour the earth for my bread, and I will see them no more. »

The other parties into which the state was divided saw the events of the 5th October

with other feelings, and if they did not forward, at least found their account in them.

The Constitutional party, or those who desired a democratical government with a King at its head, had reason to hope that Louis, being in Paris, must remain at their absolute disposal, separated from those who might advise counter-revolutionary steps, and guarded only by national troops, embodied in the name, and through the powers, of the Revolution. Every day, indeed, rendered Louis more dependent on La Fayette and his friends, as the only force which remained to preserve order; for he soon found it a necessary though a cruel measure to disband his faithful *Gardes du Corps*, and that perhaps as much with a view to their safety as to his own.

The Constitutional party seemed strong both in numbers and reputation. La Fayette was commandant of the National Guards, and they looked up to him with that homage and veneration with which young troops, and especially of this description, regard a leader of experience and bravery, who, in accepting the command, seems to share his laurels with the citizen-soldier, who has won none of his own. Bailli was Mayor of Paris, and, in the height of a popularity not undeserved, was so well established in the minds of the better class of citizens, that, in any other times than those when he lived, he might safely have despised

the suffrages of the rabble, always to be bought, either by largesses or flattery. The Constitutionalists had also a strong majority in the Assembly, where the Republicans dared not yet throw off the mask, and the Assembly, following the person of the King, came also to establish its sittings in their stronghold, the metropolis. They seemed, therefore, to assume the ascendancy in the first instance, after the 5th and 6th of October, and to reap all the first fruits of the victory then achieved, though by their connivance rather than their active co-operation.

It is wonderful, that, meaning still to assign to the regal dignity a high constitutional situation, La Fayette should not have exerted himself to preserve its dignity undegraded, and to save the honour, as he certainly saved the lives, of the royal family. Three reasons might prevent his doing what, as a gentleman and a soldier, he must otherwise at least have attempted. First, although he boasted highly of his influence with the National Guard of Paris, it may be doubted whether all his popularity would have borne him through in any endeavour to deprive the good people of that city of such a treat as the Joyous Entry of the 6th of October, or whether the civic power would, even for the immediate defence of the King's person, have used actual force against the band of Amazons who directed that memo-

rable procession. Secondly, La Fayette might fear the revival of the fallen colossus of despotism, more than the rising spirit of anarchy, and thus be induced to suppose that a conquest in the King's cause over a popular insurrection, might be too active a cordial to the drooping spirits of the Royalists. And, lastly, the revolutionary general, as a politician, might not be unwilling that the King and his consort should experience, in their own persons, such a specimen of popular power, as might intimidate them from further opposition to the popular will, and incline Louis to assume unresistingly his diminished rank in the new constitution.

The Republican party, with better reason than the Constitutionalists, exulted in the King's change of residence. It relieved them as well as Fayette's party from all apprehension of Louis raising his standard in the provinces, and taking the field on his own account, like Charles of England in similar circumstances. Then they already foresaw, that whenever the Constitutionalists should identify themselves with the crown, whom all parties had hitherto laboured to represent as the common enemy, they would become proportionally unpopular with the people at large, and lose possession of the superior power as a necessary consequence. Aristocrats, the only class which was sincerely united

to the King's person, would, they might safely predict, dread and distrust the Constitutionalists, while with the democrats, so very much the more numerous party, the King's name, instead of a tower of strength, as the poet has termed it, must be a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. They foresaw, finally, either that the King must remain the mere passive tool of the Constitutionalists, acting unresistingly under their order,—in which case the office would be soon regarded as an idle and expensive bauble, without any force or dignity of free-will, and fit only to be flung aside as an unnecessary incumbrance on the republican forms,—or, in the event of the King attempting, either by force or escape, to throw off the yoke of the Constitutionalists, he would equally furnish arms to the pure democrats against his person and office, as the source of danger to the popular cause. Some of the republican chiefs had probably expected a more sudden termination to the reign of Louis from an insurrection so threatening; at least these leaders had been the first to hail and to encourage the female insurgents, on their arrival at Versailles.[1] But though the issue of that insurrection may have fallen short of their hopes,

[1] Barnave, as well as Mirabeau, the Republican as well as the Orleanist, was heard to exclaim,—« Courage, brave Parisians—liberty for ever—fear nothing—we are for you! »—*Mémoires de Ferrières, Livre 4e*.

it could not but be highly acceptable to them so far as it went.

The party of Orleans had hitherto wrapt in its dusky folds many of those names, which were afterwards destined to hold dreadful rank in the revolutionary history. The prince whose name they adopted is supposed to have been animated partly by a strong and embittered spirit of personal hatred against the Queen, and partly, as we have already said, by an ambitious desire to supplant his kinsman. He placed, according to general report, his treasures, and all which his credit could add to them, at the disposal of men, abounding in those energetic talents which carry their owners forward in times of public confusion, but devoid alike of fortune, character, and principle; who undertook to serve their patron by enlisting in his cause the obscure and subordinate agents, by whom mobs were levied, and assassins subsidized. It is said, that the days of the 5th and 6th of October were organized by the secret agents of Orleans, and for his advantage; that, had the enterprise succeeded, the King would have been deposed, and the Duke of Orleans proclaimed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, while his revenge would probably have been satiated with the Queen's assassination. He is stated to have skulked in disguise about the outskirts of the scene when the tumult was at the highest, but

never to have had courage to present himself boldly to the people, either to create a sensation by surprise, or to avail himself of that which his satellites had already excited in his favour.[1] His resolution having thus failed him at the point where it was most necessary, and the tumult having ended without any thing taking place in his favour, the Duke of Orleans was made a scape-goat, and the only one, to atone for the whole insurrection. Under the title of an Embassy to England, he was honourably exiled from his native country. Mirabeau spoke of him in terms of the utmost contumely, as being base-minded as a lackey, and totally unworthy the trouble which had been taken on his account. His other adherents gradually and successively dropped away, in proportion as the wealth, credit, and character of this besotted prince rendered him incapable of maintaining his gratuities; and they sailed henceforth under their own flag, in the storms he had fitted them to navigate. These were men who had resolved to use the revolutionary axe for cutting out their own private fortunes, and, little interesting themselves about the political principles which divided the other parties of the state, they kept firm hold of all the subordinate machinery despised by the others in the abstraction of metaphysical spe-

[1] See the proceedings before the Châtelet.

culation, but which gave them the exclusive command of the physical force of the mob of Paris—Paris, the metropolis of France, and the prison-house of her monarch.

CHAPTER VI.

La Fayette resolves to enforce Order.—A Baker is murdered by the Rabble—One of his Murderers Executed.—Decree imposing Martial Law in case of Insurrection.—Democrats supported by the Audience in the Gallery of the Assembly.—Introduction of the Doctrines of Equality—They are in their exaggerated sense inconsistent with Human Nature and the Progress of Society.—The Assembly abolish Titles of Nobility, Armorial Bearings, and Phrases of Courtesy—Reasoning on these Innovations.—Disorder of Finance.—Necker becomes unpopular.—Seizure of Church-Lands.—Issue of Assignats.—Necker leaves France in unpopularity.—New Religious Institution.—Oath imposed on the Clergy—Resisted by the greater part of the Order—Bad Effects of the Innovation.—General View of the Operations of the Constituent Assembly.—Enthusiasm of the People for their new Privileges.—Limited Privileges of the Crown.—King is obliged to dissemble—His Negotiations with Mirabeau—With Bouillé.—Attack on the Palace of the King—Prevented by Fayette.—Royalists expelled from the Palace of the Tuileries.—Escape of Louis.—He is captured at Varennes—Brought back to Paris.—Riot in the Champ de Mars—Put down by Military Force.—Louis accepts the Constitution.

La Fayette followed up his victory over the Duke of Orleans by some bold and successful attacks upon the revolutionary right of insurrection, through which the people of late

had taken on themselves the office of judges at once and executioners. This had hitherto been thought one of the sacred privileges of the Revolution; but, determined to set bounds to its farther progress, La Fayette resolved to restore the dominion of the law over the will of the rabble.

A large mob, in virtue of the approbation, the indulgence at least, with which similar frolics had been hitherto treated, had seized upon and hanged an unhappy baker, who fell under their resentment as a public enemy, because he sold bread dear when he could only purchase grain at an enormous price. They varied the usual detail with some additional circumstances, causing many of his brethren in trade to salute the bloody head, which they paraded according to their wont; and finally, by pressing the dead lips to those of the widow, as she lay fainting before them. This done, and in the full confidence of impunity, they approached the hall of the Assembly, in order to regale the representatives of the people with the same edifying spectacle.

The baker being neither an aristocrat nor nobleman, the authorities ventured upon punishing the murder, without fearing the charge of *incivisme*. La Fayette, at the head of a detachment of the National Guards, attacked and dispersed the assassins, and the active citizen who carried the head was tried, condemned,

and hanged, just as if there had been no revolution in the kingdom. There was much surprise at this, as there had been no such instance of severity since the day of the Bastille. This was not all.

La Fayette, who may now be considered as at the head of affairs, had the influence and address to gain from the Assembly a decree, empowering the magistracy, in case of any rising, to declare martial law by displaying a red flag; after which signal, those who refused to disperse should be dealt with as open rebels. This edict, much to the purpose of the British Riot Act, did not pass without opposition, as it obviously tended to give the bayonets of the National Guard a decided ascendancy over the pikes and clubs of the rabble of the suburbs. The Jacobins, meaning the followers of Marat, Robespierre, and Danton, and even the Republicans, or Brissotins, had hitherto considered these occasional insurrections and murders like affairs of posts in a campaign, in which they themselves had enjoyed uniformly the advantage; but while La Fayette was followed and obeyed by the National Guard, men of substance, and interested in maintaining order, it was clear that he had both the power and will to stop in future these revolutionary excesses.

This important advantage in some degree balanced the power which the republican and

revolutionary party had acquired. These predominated, as has been already said, in the Club of Jacobins, in which they reviewed the debates of the Assembly, denouncing at their pleasure those who opposed them; but they had besides a decided majority among the daily attendants in the tribunes, who, regularly paid, and supplied with food and liquors, filled the Assembly with their clamours of applause or disapprobation, according to the rules they had previously received. It is true, the hired auditors gave their voices and applause to those who paid them, but nevertheless they had party feelings of their own, which often dictated unbought suffrages, in favour of those who used the most exaggerated tone of revolutionary fury. They shouted with sincere and voluntary zeal for such men as Marat, Robespierre, and Danton, who yelled out for the most bloody measures of terror and proscription, and proclaimed war against the nobles with the same voice with which they flattered the lowest vices of the multitude.

By degrees the Revolution appeared to have assumed a different object from that for which it was commenced. France had obtained liberty, the first, and certainly the worthiest object which a nation can desire. Each individual was declared as free as it was possible for him to be, retaining the least respect to the social compact. It is true, the Frenchman was

not practically allowed the benefit of this freedom; for though the Rights of Man permitted the citizen to go where he would, yet, in practice, he was apt to find his way to the next prison unless furnished with a municipal passport, or to be murdered by the way, if accused of aristocracy. In like manner, his house was secure as a castle, his property sacred as the ornaments of a temple;—excepting against the Committee of Research, who might, by their arbitrary order, break into the one, and dilapidate the other at pleasure. Still, however, the general principle of Liberty was established in the fullest metaphysical extent, and it remained to place on as broad a footing the sister principle of Equality.

To this the attention of the Assembly was now chiefly directed. In the proper sense, equality of rights and equality of laws, a constitution which extends like protection to the lowest and the highest, are essential to the existence and to the enjoyment of freedom. But to erect a levelling system, designed to place the whole mass of the people on the same footing as to habits, manners, tastes, and sentiments, is a gross and ridiculous contradiction of the necessary progress of society. It is a fruitless attempt to wage war with the laws of Nature. She has varied the face of the world with mountain and valley, lake and torrent, forest and champaign, and she has formed the

human body in all the different shapes and complexions we behold, with all the various degrees of physical force and weakness. She has avoided equality in all her productions, as she was formerly said to have abhorred a vacuum; even in those of her works which present the greatest apparent similarity, exact equality does not exist; no one leaf of a tree is precisely similar to another, and among the countless host of stars, each differs from the other in glory. But what are these physical varieties to the endless change exhibited in the human character, with all its various passions, powers, and prejudices, so artfully compounded in different proportions, that it is probable there has not existed, since Adam's time to ours, an exact resemblance between any two individuals? As if this were not enough, there came, to aid the diversity, the effects of climate, of government, of education, and habits of life, all of which lead to endless modifications of the individual. The inequalities arising from the natural differences of talent and disposition are multiplied beyond calculation, as society increases in civilization.

The savage may, indeed, boast a rude species of equality in some patriarchal tribes, but the wiliest and strongest, the best hunter, and the bravest warrior, soon lords it over the rest, and becomes a king or chief. One portion of

the nation, from happy talents, or happy circumstances, rises to the top, another sinks, like dregs, to the bottom; a third portion occupies a mid-place between them. As society advances, the difference of ranks advances with it. And can it be proposed seriously, that any other quality, than that of rights, can exist between those who think and those who labour; those « whose talk is of bullocks, » and those whose time permits them to study the paths of wisdom? Happy, indeed, is the country and constitution, where those distinctions, which must necessarily exist in every society, are not separated by insurmountable barriers, but where the most distinguished rank is open to receive that precious supply of wisdom and talent, which so frequently elevates individuals from the lowest to the highest classes: and so far as general equality can be attained, by each individual having a fair right to raise himself to the situation which he is qualified to occupy, by his talents, his merits, or his wealth, the gates cannot be thrown open too widely. But the attempt of the French legislators was precisely the reverse, and went to establish the proposed equality of ranks, by depressing the upper classes into the same order with those who occupy the middle of society, while they essayed the yet more absurd attempt, to crush down these last, by the weight of legislative authority, into a level with

the lowest orders,—men whose education, if it has not corrupted their hearts, must necessarily have blunted their feelings, and who, in a great city like Paris, exchange the simplicity which makes them respectable under more favourable circumstances, for the habitual indulgence of the coarsest and grossest pleasures. Upon the whole, it must be admitted, that in every state far advanced in the progress of civilization, the inequality of ranks is a natural and necessary attribute. Philosophy may comfort those who regret this necessity, by the assurance that the portions of individual happiness and misery are divided amongst high and low with a very equal hand; and religion assures us that there is a future state, in which, with amended natures and improved faculties, the vain distinctions of this world will no longer subsist. But any practical attempt to remedy the inequality of rank in civilized society by forcible measures, may indeed degrade the upper classes, but cannot improve those beneath them. Laws may deprive the gentleman of his title, the man of education of his books, or, to use the French illustration, the *muscadin* of his clothes; but this cannot make the clown a man of breeding, or give learning to ignorance, or decent attire to the Sans Culottes. Much will be lost to the grace, the information, and the decency of society in general, but nothing can possibly be gained by any

individual. Nevertheless, it was in this absolutely impracticable manner, that the exaggerated feelings of the French legislators, at this period of total change, undertook to equalize the nation which they were now regenerating.

With a view to this great experiment upon human society, the Assembly abolished all titles of honour, all armorial bearings, and even the insignificant titles of Monsieur and Madame; which, meaning nothing but phrases of common courtesy, yet, with other expressions of the same kind, serve to soften the ordinary intercourse of life, and preserve that gentleness of manners which the French, by a happy name, were wont to call *la petite morale*. The first of these abrogations affected the nobles in particular. In return for their liberal and unlimited surrender of their essential powers and privileges, they were now despoiled of their distinction and rank in society;—as if those who had made prisoner and plundered a cavalier, should, last of all, have snatched away in derision the plume from his hat. The aristocracy of France, so long distinguished as the flower of European chivalry, were now, so far as depended on the legislature, entirely abolished. The voice of the nation had pronounced against them a general sentence of degradation, which, according to the feelings of the order, could only be the punishment of some foul and disgraceful crime; and the con-

dition of the ex-nobles might justly have been described as Bolingbroke paints his own,

> Eating the bitter bread of banishment,
> While you have fed upon my seignories,
> Dispark'd my parks, and fell'd my forest woods,
> From my own windows torn my household coat,
> Razed off my impress, leaving me no sign,
> Save men's opinions and my living blood,
> To show the world I was a gentleman.

It was a fatal error, that, in search of that equality which it is impossible to attain, the assembly should have torn down the ancient institutions of chivalry. Viewing them philosophically, they are indeed of little value; but where are the advantages beyond the means, first, of mere subsistence, secondly, of information, which ought not to be indifferent to true philosophers? And yet, where exists the true philosopher, who has been able effectually to detach himself from the common mode of thinking on such subjects? The estimation set upon birth or rank, supposing its foundation illusory, has still the advantage of counterbalancing that which is attracted by wealth only; the prejudice has something generous and noble in it, is connected with historical recollections and patriotic feelings, and if it sometimes gives rise to extravagances, they are such as society can restrain and punish by the mere effect of ridicule. It is curious, even in the midst of the Revolution,

and amongst those who were its greatest favourers, what difficulties were found to emancipate themselves from those ancient prejudices which affected the difference of ranks.[1]

As for the proscription of the phraseology of civilized society, it had an absurd appearance of affectation in the eyes of most people of understanding; but on some enthusiastic minds it produced a worse effect than that of mere disgust. Let a man place himself in the attitude of fear or of rage, and he will in some measure feel the passion arise in his mind which corresponds with the gesture he has assumed. In like manner, those who affected the brutal manners, coarse language, and slovenly dress of the lower orders, familiarized their imaginations with the violent and savage thoughts and actions proper to the class whose costume they had thus adopted. Above all, when this sacrifice was made to the very taste and phraseology of that class (the last points in which one would think them deserving of imitation), it appeared to intimate the progres-

[1] The Comte de Mirabeau was furious at being called *Riquetti l'aîné*, and said, with great bitterness, when his speeches were promulgated under that name, « *Avec votre Riquetti, vous avez désorienté l'Europe pour trois jours.* » Mirabeau was at heart an aristocrat. But what shall we say of Citoyenne Roland, who piques herself on the plebeian sound of her name, *Manon Philipon*, yet inconsequentially upbraids Citoyen Pache with his father's having been a porter!

sive strength of the revolutionary tide, which, sweeping before it all distinctions, trivial as well as important, seemed soon destined to overthrow the throne, now isolated and well nigh undefended. The next step was necessary to fix the executive government in the same body which enjoyed the powers of legislation,—the surest of all roads to tyranny. But although the doctrine of equality, thus understood, is absurd in theory and impossible in practice, yet it will always find willing listeners when preached to the lower classes, whose practical view of it results into an agrarian law, or a general division of property.

There was one order yet remained, however, which was to be levelled,—the destruction of the church was still to be accomplished; and the Republican party proceeded in the work of demolition with infinite address, by including the great object in a plan for restoring finance, and providing for the expenses of the state, without imposing further burthens on the people.

It must be remembered that the States-general had been summoned to restore the finances of the country. This was the cause of their convocation. But although they had exercised almost every species of power—had thrown down and rebuilt every constituted authority in the kingdom, still the finances were as much embarrassed as ever, or much

more so; since most men in France judged the privilege of refusing to pay taxes, the most unequivocal, and not the least pleasing part, of their newly-acquired freedom.

Necker, so often received among the populace as a saviour of the country, was here totally at a loss. The whole relative associations which bind men together in the social contract, seemed to be rent asunder; and where public credit is destroyed, a financier, however able, resembles Prospero, after his wand is broken, and his book sunk in the deep sea. Accordingly, Necker in vain importuned the Assembly, by representing the pressure of the finances. They became wearied with his remonstrances, and received them with manifest symptoms of coldness and disrespect. What service, indeed, could the regulated advice, and deep-calculated and combined schemes of a financier, have rendered to men, who had already their resources in their eye, and were determined that no idle scruple should prevent their pouncing upon them? Necker's expostulations, addressed to their ears, were like a lecture upon thrift and industry to Robin Hood and his merry-men, when they were setting forth to rob the rich in the name of the poor.

The Assembly had determined, that, all prejudices apart, the property of the church should come under confiscation for the benefit of the

nation. It was in vain that the clergy exclaimed against these acts of rapine and extortion—in vain that they stated themselves as an existing part of the nation, and that as such they had coalesced with the Assembly under the implied ratification of their own rights—in vain that they resounded in the hall the declaration solemnly adopted, that property was inviolable, save upon full compensation. It was to as little purpose that Mirabeau was reminded of his language, addressed to the Emperor Joseph upon a similar occasion.—« Despise the monks, » he had said, « as much as you will, but do not rob them. Robbery is equally a crime, whether perpetrated on the most profligate atheist, or the most bigoted capuchin. » The clergy were told with insulting gravity, that the property belonging to a community was upon a different footing from that belonging to individuals, because the state might dissolve the community or body-corporate, and resume the property attached to it; and, under this sophism, they assumed for the benefit of the public the whole right of property belonging to the Church of France.

As it was impossible to bring these immense subjects at once to sale, the Assembly adopted a system of paper-money called *Assignats*, which were secured or hypothecated upon the church-lands. The fluctuation of this paper, which was adopted against Necker's earnest

cautions, created a spirit of stock-jobbing and gambling, nearly resembling that which distinguished the famous scheme of the Mississippi. Spelman would have argued, that the taint of sacrilege attached to funds raised upon the spoils of the church; yet it must be admitted that these supplies enabled the National Assembly not only to avoid the gulph of general bankruptcy, but to dispense with many territorial exactions which pressed hard on the lower orders, and to give relief and breath to that most useful portion of the community. These desirable results, however, flowed from that divine alchemy which calls good out of evil, without affording a justification to the perpetrators of the latter.

Shortly after the adoption of this plan, embraced against his opinion and his remonstrances, Necker saw his services were no longer acceptable to the Assembly, and that he could not be useful to the King. He tendered his resignation, which was received with cold indifference by the Assembly; and even his safety was endangered, on his return to his native country, by the very people who had twice hailed him as their deliverer. This accomplished statesman discovered too late, that public opinion requires to be guided and directed towards the ends of public good, which it will not reach by its own unassisted and misdirected efforts; and that his own popu-

larity had only been the stalking-horse, through means of which, men less honest, and more subtle than himself, had taken aim at their own objects.

But the majority of the National Assembly had yet another and even a more violent experiment to try upon the Gallican Church establishment. It was one which touched the consciences of the French clergy in the same degree as the former affected their fortunes, and was so much the less justifiable, that it is difficult to suggest any motive except the sweeping desire to introduce novelty in every department of the state, and to have a constitutional clergy as they had a constitutional King, which should have instigated them to such a measure.

When the Assembly had decreed the assumption of the church-lands, it remained to be settled on what foundation religion was to be placed within the kingdom. A motion was made for decreeing, that the Holy Apostolical religion was that of France, and that its worship alone should be permitted. A Carthusian monk, named Dom Gerle, made this proposal, alarmed too late lest the popular party, to which he had so long adhered, should now be about to innovate in the matters of the church, as they had already in those of the state. The debate was conducted with decency for one day, but on the second the hall

of the Assembly was surrounded by a large and furious multitude, who insulted, beat, and maltreated all who were known to favour the measure under consideration. It was represented within the house, that the passing the decree proposed would be the signal for a religious war; and Dom Gerle withdrew his motion in terror and despair.

The success of this opposition showed, that almost any experiment on the church might be tried with effect, since the religion which it taught seemed no longer to interest the national legislators. A scheme was brought forward, in which the public worship (*culte public*) as it was affectedly termed, without any addition of reverence (as if to give it the air of a mere code of formal enactments), was provided for on the narrowest and most economical plan. But this was not all. A civil constitution was by the same code framed for the clergy, declaring them totally independent of the See of Rome, and vesting the choice of bishops in the departmental authorities. To this constitution each priest and prelate was required to adhere by a solemn oath. A subsequent decree of the Assembly declared forfeiture of his benefice against whosoever should hesitate; but the clergy of France showed in that trying moment that they knew how to chuse betwixt sinning against their conscience, and suffering wrong at the hands

of man. Their dependence on the See of Rome was a part of their creed, an article of their faith, which they would not compromise. The noble attitude of firmness and self-denial adopted by prelates and richly-beneficed clergymen, who had hitherto been thought more governed by levities of every kind than by regard to their profession, commanded for a time the respect of the Assembly, silenced the blasphemies of the hired assistants in the tribunes, and gave many to fear that, in depriving the church of its earthly power, the Assembly might but give them means to extend their spiritual dominion more widely, and awake an interest in their fate which slumbered during their prosperity. « Beware what you do,» said Montlosier. « You may expel the bishop from his episcopal residence, but it will be only to open to him the cabins of the poor. If you take from his hands the cross of gold, he will display a cross of wood; and it was by a cross of wood that the world was saved.»

Summoned one by one to take the oath, or refuse it under the consequences menaced, the Assembly, fearful of the effect of their firmness, would scarce hear these sufferers speak a syllable, save Yes or No. Their tumult on the occasion resembled the beating of drums to drown the last words of a martyr. Few, indeed, were the priests who accepted the Constitutional oath. There were in the

number only three bishops. One had been a person of note—it was that Archbishop of Sens—that very Cardinal, whose mal-administration of fifteen months had led to this mighty change. Another of the three Constitutional prelates was destined to be much more remarkable—it was the celebrated Talleyrand, whose talents as a statesman have been so distinguished.

The National Assembly failed totally in their attempts to found a national church. The priests who took the oaths received neither reverence nor affection, and were only treated with decency by such as considered religion in the light of an useful political institution. They were alike despised by the sincere catholic, and the declared infidel. All of real religious feeling or devotion that was left in France turned towards their ancient pastors, and though the impulse was not strong enough to counteract the revolutionary movement, it served on many occasions to retard and embarrass it. The experiment which had thus signally miscarried, was indeed as impolitic as it was unnecessary. It can only be imputed, on the one hand, to the fanaticism of the modern philosophers, who expected by this indirect course to have degraded the christian religion; and, on the other, to the preconcerted determination of the Revolutionists, that no consideration should interfere with the plan of

new-modelling the nation through all its institutions, as well of church as of state.

Victorious at once over altar and throne, mitre and coronet, King, Nobles, and Clergy, the National Assembly seemed in fact to possess, and to exert, that omnipotence, which has been imputed to the British Parliament. Never had any legislature made such extensive and sweeping changes, and never were such changes so easily accomplished. The nation was altered in all its relations; its flag and its emblems were changed—every thing of a public character was destroyed and replaced down to the very title of the sovereign, who, no longer termed King of France and Navarre, was now called King of the French. The names and divisions of the provinces, which had existed for many years, were at once obliterated, and were supplied by a geographical partition of the territory into eighty-three departments, subdivided into six hundred districts, and these again portioned out into forty-eight thousand communities or municipalities. By thus recasting as it were the whole geographical relations of the separate territories of which France consisted, the Abbé Siéyes designed to obliterate former recollections and distinctions, and to bring every thing down to the general level of liberty and equality. But it had an effect beyond what was proposed. While the provinces existed they had their se-

parate capitals, their separate privileges; and those capitals, though in a subordinate rank, being yet the seats of provincial parliaments, had a separate consequence, inferior to, but yet distinct from, that of Paris. But when France became one single province, the importance of its sole capital, Paris, was increased to a most formidable degree; and during the whole Revolution, and through all its changes, whatever party held the metropolis was sure speedily to acquire the supreme power through the whole departments; and woe to those who made the fruitless attempt to set the sense or feelings of the nation in opposition to those of the capital! Republican or royalist was equally sure to perish in the rash attempt.

The Parliaments of France, long the strongholds of liberty, now perished unnoticed, as men pull down old houses to clear the ground for modern edifices. The sale of offices of justice was formally abolished; the power of nominating the judges was taken from the crown; the trial by jury, with inquests of accusation and conviction, corresponding to the grand and petty juries of England, were sanctioned and established. In thus clearing the channels of public justice, dreadfully clogged as they had become during the decay of the monarchy, the National Assembly rendered the greatest possible services to France, the good effects of which will long be felt Other alter-

ations were of a more doubtful character. There might be immediate policy, but there was certainly much harshness, in wresting from the crown the power of granting pardons. If this was for fear lest grace should be extended to those condemned for the new crime of *lèze-nation*, or treason against the Constitution, the legislators might have remembered how seldom the King dares to exercise this right of mercy in favour of an unpopular criminal. It requires no small courage to come betwixt the dragon and his wrath, the people and their victim. Charles I. dared not save Strafford.

The National Assembly also recognized the freedom of the press; and, in doing so, conferred on the nation a gift fraught with much good and some evil, capable of stimulating the worst passions, and circulating the most atrocious calumnies, and occasioning frequently the most enormous deeds of cruelty and injustice; but ever bearing along with it the means of curing the very evils caused by its abuses, and of transmitting to futurity the sentiments of the good and the wise, so invaluable when the passions are silenced, and the calm slow voice of reason and reflection comes to obtain a hearing. The press stimulated massacres and proscriptions during the frightful period which we are approaching; but the press has also held up to horror the memory

of the perpetrators, and exposed the artifices by which the actors were instigated. It is a rock on which a vessel may be, indeed, and is often wrecked; but that same rock affords the foundation of the brightest and noblest beacon.

We might add to the weight of benefits which France unquestionably owes to the Constituent Assembly, that they restored liberty of conscience by establishing universal toleration. But against this benefit must be set the violent imposition of the Constitutional oath upon the catholic clergy, which led afterwards to such horrible massacres of innocent and reverend victims, murdered in defiance of those rules of toleration, which, rather in scorn of religion of any kind than regard to men's consciences, the Assembly had previously adopted.

Faithful to their plan of forming, not a popular monarchy, but a species of royal republic, and stimulated by the real republicans, whose party was daily gaining ground among their ranks, as well as by the howls and threats of those violent and outrageous demagogues, who; from the seats they had adopted in the Assembly, were now known by the name of the Mountain, the framers of the Constitution had rendered it democratical in every point, and abridged the royal authority, till its powers became so dim and obscure as to me-

rit Burke's happy illustration, when he exclaimed, speaking of the new-modelled French government,—

> « —— What *seem'd* its head,
> The *likeness* of a kingly crown had on.»

The crown was deprived of all appointments to civil offices, which were filled up by popular elections, the Constitutionalists being in this respect faithful to their own principles, which made the will of the people the source of all power. Never was such an immense patronage vested in the body of any nation at large, and the arrangement was politic in the immediate sense, as well as in conformity with the principles of those who adopted it; for it attached to the new Constitution the mass of the people, who felt themselves elevated from villanage into the exercise of sovereign power. Each member of the elective assembly of a municipality, through whose collective votes bishops, administrators, judges, and other official persons received their appointments, felt for the moment the importance which his privilege bestowed, and recognized in his own person, with corresponding self-complacency, a fraction, however small, of the immense community, now governed by those whom they themselves elected into office. The charm of power is great at all

times, but exquisite to intoxication to those to whom it is a novelty.

Called to the execution of these high duties, which hitherto they had never dreamed of, the people at large became enamoured of their own privileges, carried them into every department of society, and were legislators and debaters in season and out of season. The exercise even of the extensive privilege committed to them seemed too limited to these active citizens. The Revolution appeared to have turned the heads of the whole lower classes, and those who had hitherto thought least of political rights were now seized with the fury of deliberating, debating, and legislating, in all possible times and places. The soldiers on guard debated at the Oratoire—the journeymen tailors held a popular assembly at the Colonnade—the peruke-makers met at the Champs-Elysées. In spite of the opposition of the National Guard, three thousand shoemakers deliberated on the price of shoes, in the Place Louis Quinze; every house of call was converted into the canvassing-hall of a political body; and France for a time presented the singular picture of a country, where every one was so much involved in public business, that he had little leisure to attend to his own.

There was, besides, a general disposition to

assume and practise the military profession: for the right of insurrection having been declared sacred, each citizen was to be prepared to discharge effectually so holy a duty. The citizens procured muskets to defend their property—the rabble obtained pikes to invade that of others—the people of every class everywhere possessed themselves of arms, and the most peaceful burgesses were desirous of the honours of the epaulet. The children, with mimicry proper to their age, formed battalions in the streets, and the spirit in which they were formed was intimated by the heads of cats borne upon pikes in front o the juvenile revolutionists.[1]

In the departments, the fever of legislation was the same. Each district had its permanent committee, its committee of police, its military committee, civil committee, and committee of subsistence. Each committee had its president, its vice-president, and its secretaries. Each district was desirous of exercising legislative authority; each committee of usurping the executive power.[2] Amid these subordinate conclaves, every theme of eulogy and enthusiasm referred to the Revolution which had made way for the power they enjoyed, every subject of epidemic alarm to the most distant return towards the ancient sys-

[1] Mémoires du Marquis de Ferrières, Livre III.

[2] Mémoires de Bailli, 16 Août.

tem which had left the people in insignificance. Rumour found a ready audience for every one of her thousand tongues; Discord a prompt hand, in which she might place each of her thousand snakes.

The affiliation, as it was called, or close correspondence of the Jacobin Clubs in all their ramifications, tended to influence the political fever, and to direct its fury against the last remains of royalty. Exaggerated and unfounded reports of counter-revolutionary plots and aristocratical conspiracies, not a little increased by the rash conversation and impotent efforts of the nobility in some districts, were circulated with the utmost care; and the falsehood, which had been confuted at Paris, received new currency in the departments, as that which was of departmental growth was again circulated with eagerness in the metropolis. Thus, the minds of the people were perpetually kept in a state of excitation, which is not without its pleasures. They are of a nature peculiarly incompatible with soundness in judgment and moderation in action, but favourable in the same degree to audacity of thought, and determination in execution.

The royal prerogative of the King, so closely watched, was in appearance formidable enough to be the object of jealousy and suspicion, but in reality a mere pageant, which possessed no means either of attack or resistance.

The King was said to be the organ of the executive power, yet he had named but a small proportion of the officers in the army and navy, and those who received their appointments from a source so obnoxious possessed little credit amongst those whom they commanded. He was the nominal head of six ministers, who were perpetually liable to be questioned by the Assembly, in which they might be called to defend themselves as criminals, but had no seat or vote to enable them to mingle in its debates. This was, perhaps, one of the greatest errors of the Constitution; for the relation which the ministers bore to the legislative body was of such a limited and dependent nature as excluded all ideas of confidence and cordiality. The King's person was said to be inviolable, but the frowning brows of a large proportion of his subjects, their public exclamations, and the pamphlets circulated against him, intimated very different doctrine. He might propose to the Assembly the question of peace or war, but it remained with them to decide upon it. Lastly, the King had the much-grudged privilege of putting a veto on any decree of the legislative body, which was to have the effect of suspending the passing of the law until the proposition had been renewed in two successive Assemblies; after which the royal sanction was held as granted. This mode of arresting the progress of any fa-

vourite law was likely to be as dangerous to the sovereign, in its exercise, as the attempt to stop a carriage by catching hold of the wheel. In fact, whenever the King attempted to use this sole relic of monarchical power, he risked his life, and it was by doing so that he at length forfeited it. Among these mutilated features of sovereignty, it is scarce worth while to mention, that the King's effigy was still struck upon the public coin, and his name prefixed to public edicts.

Small as was the share of public power which the new Constitution of France afforded to the crown, Louis, in outward semblance at least, appeared satisfied. He made it a rule to adopt the advice of the Assembly on all occasions, and to sanction every decree which was presented to him. He accepted even that which totally changed the constitution of the Gallican Church. He considered himself doubtless as under forcible restraint, ever since he had been dragged in triumph from Versailles to Paris, and therefore complied with what was proposed to him, under the tacit protest that his acquiescence was dictated by force and fear. His palace was guarded by eight hundred men, with two pieces of cannon; and although this display of force was doubtless intended by La Fayette to assure Louis's personal safety, yet it was no less certain that it was designed also to prevent his escape from

the metropolis. The King had, therefore, good cause to conceive himself possessed of the melancholy privilege of a prisoner, who cannot incur any legal obligation by acts which do not flow from free-will, and therefore finds a resource against oppression in the incapacities which attend it. It was, however, carrying this privilege to the verge of dissimulation, nay, beyond it, when[1] the King went, apparently freely and voluntarily, down to the National Assembly, and, in a dignified and touching speech (could it have been thought a sincere one), accepted the Constitution, made common cause with the regenerated nation, and declared himself the head of the Revolution. Constrained as he was by circumstances, anxious for his own safety and that of his family, the conduct of Louis must not be too severely criticized; but this step was unkingly as well as impolitic; and the unfortunate monarch gained nothing by abasing himself to the deceit which he practised at the urgency of his ministers, excepting the degradation attending a deception, by which none are deceived. No one, when the heat of the first enthusiasm was over, gave the King credit for sincerity in his acceptance of the Constitution; the Royalists were revolted, and the Revolutionists could only regard

[1] 4th February, 1790.

the speech and accession as the acts of royal hypocrisy. Louis was openly spoken of as a prisoner; and the public voice, in a thousand different forms, announced that his life would be the penalty of any attempt to his deliverance.

Meanwhile, the King endeavoured to work out his escape from Paris and the Revolution at once, by the means of two separate agents in whom alone he confided.

The first was no other than Mirabeau, that very Mirabeau who had contributed so much to the Revolution, but who, an aristocrat at heart, and won over to the royal party by high promises of wealth and advancement, at length laboured seriously to undo his own work. His plan was, to use the Assembly itself, in which his talents, eloquence, and audacity, gave him so much influence, as the means of re-establishing the royal authority. He proposed, as the final measure, that the King should retire from Paris to Metz, then under the government of the Marquis de Bouillé, and he conceived his own influence in the Assembly to be such, that he could have drawn thither, upon some reasonable terms of accommodation, a great majority of the members. It is certain he had the highest ascendancy which any individual orator exercised over that body, and was the only one who dared to retort threats and defiance to the formidable Jacobins. « I have resisted military and ministerial

despotism," said he, when opposing a proposed law against the emigrants; "can it be supposed I will yield to that of a Club?"—"By what right," exclaimed Goupil, "does Mirabeau act as a dictator in the Assembly?"—"Goupil," replied Mirabeau, "is as much mistaken when he calls me a dictator, as formerly when he termed me a Catiline."—The indignant roar of the Jacobins bellowing from their boasted Mountain, in vain endeavoured to interrupt him.—"Silence these thirty voices," said Mirabeau, at the full pitch of his thundering voice; and the volcano was silent at his bidding. Yet, possessed as he was of this mighty power, Mirabeau did not, perhaps, reflect how much less it would have availed him on the royal side, than when he sailed with all the wind and tide which the spirit of a great and general revolution could lend him. He was a man, too, as remarkable for his profligacy as his wonderful talents, and the chance which the King must have risked in embarking with him, was like that of the prince in the tale, who escaped from a desert island by embarking on board a skiff drifting among dangerous eddies, and rowed by a figure half human and half tiger.[1] The experiment was prevented

[1] Mirabeau bore much of his character imprinted on his person and features. He was short, bull-necked, and very strongly made. A quantity of thick matted hair hung round features of a coarse and exaggerated charac-

by the sudden and violent illness and death of Mirabeau, who fell a victim to his debaucheries. His death was greatly lamented, though it is probable that, had the Apostle of the Revolution lived much longer, he would either have averted its progress, or his dissevered limbs would have ornamented the pikes of those multitudes, who, as it was, followed him to the grave with weapons trailed, and howling and lamentation.[1]

The King's other confidant was the Marquis de Bouillé, a person entirely different from Mirabeau. He was a French soldier of the old stamp, a royalist by birth and disposition; had gained considerable fame during the American war, and at the time of the Revolution was governor of Metz and Alsace. Bouillé was endowed with a rare force of character, and proved able, without having recourse to disguise of any kind, to keep the garrison of Metz in tolerable discipline during the general dissolution of the army. The state of military insubordination was so great, that La Fayette,

ter, strongly scarred and seamed. « Figure to your mind, » he said, describing his own countenance to a lady who knew him not, « a tiger who has had the small-pox. » When he talked of confronting his opponents in the Assembly, his favourite phrase was, « I will show them *La Hure*, » that is, the boar's head, meaning his own tusked and shaggy countenance.

[1] He died 2d April, 1791.

and his party in the Assembly, not only hesitated to dismiss a general who was feared and obeyed by the regiments under his command, but, royalist as he was, they found themselves obliged to employ the Marquis de Bouillé and his troops in subduing the formidable revolt of three regiments quartered at Nancy, which he accomplished with complete success, and such slaughter among the insurgents, as was likely to recommend subordination in future. The Republican party of course gave this act of authority the name of a massacre of the people, and even the Assembly at large, though Bouillé acted in consequence of their authority, saw with anxiety the increased importance of an avowed Royalist. La Fayette, who was Bouillé's relation, spared no pains to gain him to the Constitutional side, while Bouillé avowed publicly that he only retained his command in obedience to the King, and in the hope of serving him.

With this general, who had as yet preserved an authority that was possessed by no other Royalist in France, the King entered into a close though secret correspondence in cypher, which turned chiefly on the best mode of facilitating the escape of the royal family from Paris, where late incidents had rendered his abode doubly odious and doubly dangerous.

La Fayette's strength consisted in his popularity with the middle classes of the Parisians,

who, in the character of National Guards, looked up to him as their commandant, and in general obeyed his orders in dispersing those tumultuous assemblies of the lower orders, which threatened danger to persons and property. But La Fayette, though fixed in his principle to preserve monarchy as a part of the constitution, seems to have been always on cold and distrustful terms with the monarch personally. He was perpetually trying his own feelings, and those whom he influenced, by the thermometer, and became alarmed if his own loyalty or theirs arose above the most tepid degree.

Two marked incidents served to show that the civic guard were even less warm than their commandant in zeal for the royal person.

The National Guard, headed by La Fayette, together with the edict respecting martial law, had, as we have observed, greatly contributed to the restoration of order in Paris, by checking, and dispersing, upon various occasions, those disorderly assemblies of rioters, whose violence and cruelty had dishonoured the commencement of the Revolution. But the spirit which raised these commotions was unabated, and was carefully nourished by the Jacobins and all their subordinate agents, whose popularity lay among the rabble, as that of the Constitutionalists did with the citizens. Among the current falsehoods of the day,

arose a report that the old Castle of Vincennes, situated about three miles from Paris, was to be used as a state prison in place of the Bastille. A large mob marched from the suburb called Saint Antoine, the residence of a great number of labourers of the lowest order, already distinguished by its zeal for the revolutionary doctrines.[1] They were about to commence the destruction of the ancient castle, when the vigilant commandant of Paris arrived and dispersed them, not without bloodshed. In the mean time, the few Royalists whom Paris still contained became alarmed lest this tumult, though beginning in another quarter, might be turned against the person of the King. For his protection about three hundred gentlemen repaired to the Tuileries, armed with sword-canes, short swords, pistols, and such other weapons as could be best concealed about their persons, as they went through the streets. Their services and zeal were graciously acknowledged by the unfortunate Louis, little accustomed of late to such marks of devotion. But when La Fayette returned to the palace, at the head of his grenadiers of the National Guard, he seems not to have been ill pleased that the intrusion of these gentlemen gave him an opportunity of showing, that if he had dispersed the revolutionary mob of the Fau-

[1] February 28th, 1791.

bourgs, it was without any undue degree of affection to the royal cause. He felt, or affected, extreme jealousy of the armed aristocrats whom he found in the Tuileries, and treated them as men who had indecently thrust themselves into the palace, to usurp the duty of defending the King's person, by law consigned to the National Guard. To appease the jealousy of the civic soldiers, the King issued his commands upon the Royalists to lay down their arms. He was no sooner obeyed by those, to whom alone out of so many millions he could still issue his commands, than a most scandalous scene ensued. The soldiers, falling upon the unfortunate gentlemen, expelled them from the palace with blows and insult, applying to them the name of Knights of the Poniard, afterwards often repeated in revolutionary objurgation. The vexation and sorrow of the captive prince had a severe effect on his health, and was followed by indisposition.

The second incident we have alluded to intimated even more directly the personal restraint in which he was now held. Early in spring[1] Louis had expressed his purpose of going to Saint Cloud, under the pretext of seeking a change of air, but in reality, it may be supposed, for the purpose of ascertaining what degree of liberty he would be permitted

[1] 18th April, 1791.

to exercise. The royal carriages were drawn out, and the King and Queen had already mounted theirs, when the cries of the spectators, echoed by those of the National Guards who were upon duty, declared that the King should not be permitted to leave the Tuileries. La Fayette arrived—commanded, implored, threatened the refractory guards, but was answered by their unanimous refusal to obey his orders. After the scene of tumult had lasted more than an hour, and it had been clearly proved that La Fayette's authority was unable to accomplish his purpose, the royal persons returned to the palace, now their absolute and avowed prison.

La Fayette was so much moved by this affront, that he laid down his commission as commandant of the National Guard, and although he resumed it, upon the general remonstrances and excuses of the corps, it was not without severely reproaching them for their want of discipline, and intimating justly, that the respect they showed ought to be for his rank and office, not for his person.

Meantime, the natural inferences from these cruel lessons drove the King and Queen nearly desperate. The events of the 28th of February had shown that they were not to be permitted to introduce their friends or defenders within the fatal walls which enclosed them; those of the 18th April proved, that they were not

allowed to leave their precincts. To fly from Paris, to gather around him such faithful subjects as might remain, seemed, though a desperate resource, the only one which remained to the unhappy monarch, and the preparations were already made for the fatal experiment.

The Marquis de Bouillé had, under various pretences, formed a camp at Montmédy, and had drawn thither some of the troops he could best depend upon; but such was the universal indisposition, both of the soldiery and the people of every description, that the general seems to have entertained almost no hope of any favourable result for the royal cause. The King's life might have been saved by his escaping into foreign parts, but there was hardly any prospect of restoring the monarchy.

The history of the unhappy journey to Varennes is well known. On the night between the 20th and 21st of June, Louis and his Queen, with their two children, attended by one lady, and escorted by three gentlemen of the *Gardes du Corps*, set out in disguise from Paris. The King left behind him a long manifesto, inculpating the Assembly for various political errors, and solemnly protesting against the acts of government to which he had been compelled, as he stated, to give his assent, during what he termed his captivity, which he seemed to have dated from his compulsory residence in the Tuileries.

The very first person whom the Queen encountered in the streets was La Fayette himself, as he crossed the Place du Carrousel. An hundred others dangers attended the route of the unfortunate fugitives; and the hair-breadth escapes by which they profited seemed to intimate the favour of fortune, while they only proved her mutability. An escort, placed for them at the Pont de Sommeville, had been withdrawn, after their remaining at that place for a time had excited popular suspicion. At Saint Ménehould they met a small detachment of dragoons, stationed there by Bouillé also for their escort. But while they halted to change horses, the King, whose features were remarkable, was recognized by Drouet, a son of the postmaster. The young man was a keen Revolutionist, and, resolving to prevent the escape of the sovereign, he mounted a horse, and pushed forwards to Varennes to prepare the municipality for the arrival of the King.

Two remarkable chances seemed to show that the good angel of Louis still strove in his favour. Drouet was pursued by a resolute royalist, a quarter-master of dragoons, who suspected his purpose, and followed him with the design of preventing it at all hazards. But Drouet, better acquainted with the road, escaped a pursuit which might have been fatal to him. The other incident was, that Drouet for a time pursued the road to Verdun, instead

of that to Varennes, concluding the King had taken the former direction, and was only undeceived by an accident.

He reached Varennes, and found a ready disposition to stop the flight of the unhappy prince. The King was stopped at Varennes and arrested; the National Guards were called out—the dragoons refused to fight in the King's defence—an escort of hussars, who might have cut a passage, arrived too late, acted with reluctance, and finally deserted the town. Still there remained one last throw for their freedom. If the time could have been protracted but for an hour and a half, Bouillé would have been before Varennes at the head of such a body of faithful and disciplined troops as might easily have dispersed the national militia. He had even opened a correspondence with the royal prisoners through a faithful emissary who ventured into Varennes, and obtained speech of the King; but could obtain no answer more decided than that, being a prisoner, Louis declined giving any orders. Finally, almost all the troops of the Marquis de Bouillé declared against the King and in favour of the nation, tending to show the little chance which existed of a favourable issue to the King's attempt to create a royalist force. The Marquis himself made his escape with difficulty into the Austrian territories.

The Parisians in general, but especially the

Legislative Assembly, had been at first astounded, as if by an earthquake. The King's escape seemed to menace his instant return at the head of aristocratical levies, supported by foreign troops. Reflection made most men see, as a more probable termination, that the dynasty of the Bourbons could no longer hold the crown; and that the government, already so democratical in principle, must become a republic in all its forms.[1] The Constitutional-

[1] The following anecdote will serve to show by what means this conclusion was insinuated into the public mind. A group in the Palais Royal were discussing in great alarm the consequences of the King's flight, when a man dressed in a thread-bare great-coat leaped upon a chair and addressed them thus:—« Citizens, listen to a tale, which shall not be a long one. A certain well-meaning Neapolitan was once on a time startled in his evening walk, by the astounding intelligence that the Pope was dead. He had not recovered his astonishment, when behold he is informed of a new disaster,—the King of Naples was also no more. 'Surely,' said the worthy Neapolitan, 'the sun must vanish from heaven at such a combination of fatalities.' But they did not cease here. The Archbishop of Palermo, he is informed, has also died suddenly. Overcome by this last shock, he retired to bed, but not to sleep. In the morning he was disturbed in his melancholy reverie by a rumbling noise, which he recognized at once to be the motion of the wooden instrument which makes macaroni. 'Aha!' says the good man, starting up, 'Can I trust my ears?—The Pope is dead—the King of Naples is dead—the Bishop of Palermo is dead—yet my neighbour the baker makes macaroni! Come! The lives of these great folks are not then so in-

ists grieved that their constitution required a monarchical head; the Republicans rejoiced, for it had long been their object to abolish the kingly office. Nor did the anarchists of the Jacobin Club less exult; for the events which had taken place, and their probable consequences, were such as to animate the revolutionary spirit, exasperate the public mind, prevent the return of order, and stimulate the evil passions of lawless ambition, and love of blood and rapine.

But La Fayette was determined not to relinquish the constitution he had formed, and, in spite of the unpopularity of the royal dignity, rendered more so by this frustrated attempt to escape, he was resolved to uphold it; and was joined in this purpose by Barnave and others, who did not always share his sentiments, but who thought it shame, apparently, to show to the world, that a constitution, framed for immortality upon the best political principles of the most accomplished statesmen in France, was so slightly built, as to part and go asunder at the first shock. The purpose of the commandant of Paris, however, was not to be accomplished without a victory over

dispensable to the world after all.'» The man in the great-coat jumped down and disappeared. «I have caught his meaning,» said a woman amongst the listeners. «He has told us a tale, and it begins like all tales—*There was* ONCE *a King and a Queen*.»

the united strength of the Republican and Jacobinical parties, who on their part might be expected to put in motion on the occasion their many-handed revolutionary engine, an insurrection of the people.

Such was the state of political opinions, when the unfortunate Louis was brought back to Paris. He was, with his wife and children, covered with dust, dejected with sorrow, and exhausted with fatigue. The faithful *Gardes du Corps* who had accompanied their flight, sate bound like felons on the driving-seat of the carriage. His progress was at first silent and unhonoured. The guard did not present arms—the people remained covered—no man said God bless him. At another part of the route, a number of the rabble precipitated themselves on the carriage, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the National Guards, and some deputies, could assure it a safe passage. Under such auspices were the royal family committed once more to their old prison of the Tuileries.

Meantime the crisis of the King's fate seemed to be approaching. It was not long ere the political parties had an opportunity of trying their respective force. A meeting was held upon the motion of the Republican and Jacobinical leaders, in the Champ de Mars,[1]

[1] July 17, 1791.

to subscribe a petition for the dethronement of the King, couched in the boldest and broadest terms. There was in this plain a wooden edifice raised on scaffolding, called the Altar of the Country, which had been erected for the ceremony of the Federation of 14th July, 1790, when the assembled representatives of the various departments of France took their oath to observe the constitution. On this altar the petition was displayed for signature; but each revolutionary act required a preliminary libation of blood, and the victims on this occasion were two wretched invalids, whom the rabble found at breakfast under the scaffolding which supported the revolutionary altar, and accused of a design to blow up the patriots. To accuse was to condemn. They were murdered without mercy, and their heads, paraded on pikes, became as usual the standards of the insurgent citizens. The municipal officers attempted to disperse the assemblage, but to no purpose. Bailli, mayor of Paris, together with La Fayette, resolved to repel force by force; martial law was proclaimed, and its signal, the red flag, was displayed from the Hôtel-de-Ville. La Fayette, with a body of grenadiers, arrived in the Champ de Mars. He was received with abuse, and execrations of « Down with La Fayette! Down with martial law! » followed by a volley of stones. The commandant gave orders to

fire, and was on this occasion most promptly obeyed; for the grenadiers pouring their shot directly into the crowd, more than a hundred men lay dead at the first volley. The Champ de Mars was empty in an instant, and the Constituted Authority, for the first time since the Revolution commenced, remained master of a contested field. La Fayette ought to have followed up this triumph of the legal force, by giving a triumph to the law itself, in the trial and conviction of some of his prisoners, selecting particularly the agitators employed by the Club of Jacobins; but he thought he had done enough in frightening these harpies back to their dens. Some of their leaders sought and found refuge among the Republicans, which was not in that hour of danger very willingly granted.[1] Marat and many others who had been hitherto the undaunted and unwearied instigators of the rabble, were compelled to skulk in obscurity for some time after this victory of the Champ de Mars, which the Jacobins felt severely at the time, and forgot not afterwards to avenge most cruelly.

This victory led to the triumph of the Constitutionalists in the Assembly. The united exertions of those who argued against the deposition of Louis, founding their reasoning

[1] Mémoires de Madame Roland—article *Robert*.

upon that constitutional law, which declares the King inviolable in his person, overpowered the party who loudly called on the Assembly to proclaim his forfeiture, or appoint his trial. The Assembly clogged, however, the future inviolability of the King with new penalties. If the King, having accepted the constitution, should retract, they decreed he should be considered as abdicated. If he should order his army, or any part of it, to act against the nation, this should in like manner be deemed an act of abdication; and an abdicated monarch, it was farther decreed, should become an ordinary citizen, answerable to the laws for every act he had done before or since the act of abdication.

The constitution, with the royal immunity thus curtailed and maimed, was now again presented to the King, who again accepted it purely and simply, in terms which, while they excited acclamation from the Assembly, were but feebly echoed from the gallery.[1] The legislators were glad to make a virtue of necessity, and complete their constitutional code, though in a precarious manner; but the hearts of the people were now decidedly alienated from the King, and, by a strange concurrence of misfortune, mixed with some errors, Louis, whose genuine and disinterested good inten-

[1] September 14, 1791.

tions ought to have made him the darling of his subjects, had now become the object of their jealousy and detestation.

Upon reviewing the measures which had been adopted on the King's return to Paris, historians will probably be of opinion, that it was impolitic in the Assembly to offer the constitutional crown to Louis, and imprudent in that unhappy prince to accept it under the conditions annexed. On the former point it must be remembered, that these innovators, who had changed every thing else in the state, could, upon principle, have had no hesitation to alter the person or the dynasty of their sovereign. According to the sentiments which they had avowed, the King, as well as the Nobles and Clergy, was in their hands, as clay in that of the potter, to be used or thrown away at pleasure. The present King, in the manifesto left behind him on his flight, had protested to all Europe against the system of which he was made the head, and it was scarce possible that his sentiments could be altered in its favour, by the circumstances attending his unwilling return from Varennes. The Assembly, therefore, acting upon their own principles, should have at once proceeded on the idea that his flight was a virtual abdication of the crown—they should have made honour able provision for a prince placed in so un common a situation, and suffered him to enjoy

in Spain or Italy an honourable independence, so soon as the storm was ended which threatened them from abroad. In the mean while, the person of the King would have been a pledge in their hands, which might have given them some advantage in treating with the foreign princes of his family, and the potentates of Europe. The general policy of this appears so obvious, that it was probably rather the difficulty of arranging in what hands the executive authority should be lodged, than any preference of Louis XVI., which induced the Assembly again to deposit it in his hands, shorn in a great measure even of the limited consequence and privileges constitutionally annexed to it. La Fayette and his party perhaps reckoned on the King's spirit having given way, from observing how unanimously the people of France were disposed in favour of the new state of things, and may have trusted to his accommodating himself, therefore, without further resistance, to act the part of the unsubstantial pageant which the constitution assigned him.

If it was impolitic in the Constitutionalists to replace the crown upon the head of Louis, it was certainly unworthy of that monarch to accept it, unless invested with such a degree of power as might give him some actual weight and preponderance in the system. Till his flight to Varennes, the King's dislike to the

constitution was a secret in his own bosom, which might indeed be suspected from circumstances, but which could not be proved; and which, placed as he was, the King was entitled to conceal, since his real sentiments could not be avowed consistently with his personal safety. But now this veil was torn aside, and he had told all Europe in a public declaration, that he had been acting under constraint since the time he was brought in triumph from Versailles to Paris. It would certainly have been most dignified in Louis to have stood or fallen in conformity with this declaration, made on the only occasion which he had enjoyed for such a length of time, of speaking his own free sentiments. He should not, when brought back to his prison, have resumed the submission of a prisoner, or affected to accept as a desirable boon, the restoration, as it might be called, and that in a mutilated state, of a sovereignty, which he had voluntarily abandoned at such extreme personal risk. His resolutions were too flexible, and too much at the mercy of circumstances, to be royal or noble. Charles I., even in the Isle of Wight, treated with his subjects, as a prisoner indeed, but still as a King, refusing to accede to such articles as in his own mind he was determined not to abide by. Louis, we conceive, should have returned the same answer to the Assembly which he did to the royalist officer at Varennes, « that

a prisoner could give no orders, and make no concessions.» He should not, like a bird which has escaped and been retaken, forget the notes which he uttered when at freedom, and return to his set and prescribed prison-song the instant that the cage again inclosed him. No man, above all no king, should place the language of his feelings and sentiments so much at the disposal of fortune. An adherence to the sentiments expressed in his voluntary declaration might, it is possible, have afforded him the means of making some more favourable composition; whereas the affectation of willing submission to the same force which his own voice had so lately proclaimed illegal, could but make the unhappy King suspected of attempting a deceit, by which no one could be deceived. But the difficulties of his situation were great, and Louis might well remember the proverb, which places the grave of deposed sovereigns close to their prison-gates. He might be persuaded to temporize with the party which still offered to preserve a show of royalty in the constitution, until time or circumstances permitted him to enlarge its basis. In the mean time, if we can believe Bertrand de Moleville, Louis avowed to him the determination to act under the constitution with all sincerity and good faith; but it must be owned, that it would have required the virtues of a saint to have enabled him to

make good this pledge, had the success of the Austrians, or any strong counter-revolutionary movement, tempted him to renounce it. At all events, the King was placed in a doubtful and suspicious position towards the people of France, who must necessarily have viewed with additional jealousy the head of a government, who, avowedly discontented with the share of power allotted to him, had nevertheless accepted it,—like the impoverished gamester, who will rather play for small stakes than be cut out of the game.

The work of the Constitution being thus accomplished, the National, or, as it is usually called, the Constituent Assembly, dissolved itself, agreeably to the vow they had pronounced in the tennis-court at Versailles. The Constitution, that structure which they raised for immortality, soon afterwards became ruinous; but in few assemblies of statesmen have greater and more varied talents been assembled. Their debates were often fierce and stormy, their mode of arguing wild and vehement, their resolutions sudden and ill-considered. These were the faults partly of the French character, which is peculiarly open to sudden impulses, partly to the great changes perpetually crowding upon them, and to the exciting progress of a revolution which hurried all men into extravagance. On the other hand, they respected freedom of debate; and

the proscription of members of their body, for maintaining and declaring their sentiments, in opposition to that of the majority, is not to be found in their records, though so fearfully frequent in those of their successors. Their main and master error was the attempt to do too much, and to do it all at once. The parties kept no terms with each other, would wait for no conviction, and make no concession. It was a war for life and death betwixt men, who, had they seen more calmly for their country and for themselves, would rather have sacrificed some part of the theoretical exactness of principle on which they insisted, to the opportunity of averting practical evil, or attaining practical good. The errors of the Assembly were accordingly those of extremes. They had felt the weight of the feudal chains, and they destroyed the whole nobility. The monarch had been too powerful for the liberties of the subject—they now bound him as a slave at the feet of the legislative authority. Their arch of liberty gave way, because they hesitated to place upon it, in the shape of an efficient executive government, a weight sufficient to keep it steady. Yet to these men France was indebted for the first principles of civil liberty. They kindled the flame, though they could not regulate it; and such as now enjoy its temperate warmth should have sympathy for the errors of those to whom they

owe a boon so inestimable;—nor should this sympathy be the less, that so many perished in the conflagration, which, at the commencement, they had fanned too rashly. They did even more, for they endeavoured to heal the wounds of the nation by passing an act of general amnesty, which at once placed in security the Jacobins of the Champ de Mars, and the unfortunate companions of the King's flight. This was one of their last and wisest decrees, could they have enforced its observance by their successors.

The adieus which they took of power was any thing but prophetic. They pronounced the Revolution ended, and the Constitution completed—the one was but commencing, and the other was baseless as a morning dream.

CHAPTER VII.

Legislative Assembly—Its Composition.—Constitutionalists—Girondists or Brissotins—Jacobins.—Views and Sentiments of Foreign Nations—England—Views of the Tories and Whigs—Anacharsis Klootz—Austria—Prussia—Russia—Sweden.—Emigration of the French Princes and Clergy—Increasing Unpopularity of Louis from this Cause.—Death of the Emperor Leopold, and its Effects.—France declares War.—Views and Interests of the different Parties in France at this Period.—Decree against Monsieur—Louis interposes his Veto.—Decree against the Priests who should refuse the Constitutional Oath—Louis again interposes his Veto—Consequences of these Refusals.—Fall of De Lessart.—Ministers now chosen from the Brissotins.—All Parties favourable to War.

THE First, or Constituent Assembly, in destroying almost all which existed as law in France, when they were summoned together as States-general, had preserved, at least in form, the name and power of a monarch. The Legislative Assembly, which succeeded them, seemed preparing to destroy the symbol of royalty which their predecessors had left standing, though surrounded by republican enactments.

The composition of this Second Body of Representatives was much more unfavourable

to the royal cause than that of those whom they succeeded. In a bad hour for France and themselves, the Constituent Assembly had adopted two regulations, which had the same disabling effect on their own political interest, as the celebrated self-denying ordinance in the Long Parliament had upon that of the presbyterians. By the first of these decrees, the members of the Constituent Assembly were rendered incapable of being elected to that which should succeed its dissolution. By the second, they were declared ineligible to be ministers of the crown, until two years had elapsed after their sitting as legislators. Those individuals who had already acquired some political knowledge and information were thus virtually excluded from the counsels of the state, and pronounced inadmissible into the service of the crown. This exclusion was adopted upon the wild principle of levelling, which was one prime moving spring of the Revolution, and which affected to destroy even the natural aristocracy of talents. «Who are the *distinguished members* whom the speaker mentions?» said a Jacobin orator, in the true spirit of this imaginary equality;—«There are no members of the Assembly more distinguished than others by talents or skill, any more than by birth or rank—We are all EQUAL.» Rare words indeed, and flattering, doubtless, to many in the Assembly. Unhappily, no legis-

lative decree can give sense to folly, or experience to ignorance; it could only prevent a certain portion of wisdom and talent from being called into the service of the country. Both King and people were necessarily obliged to put their confidence in men of inexperience in business, liable to act with all the rashness by which inexperience is generally attended. As the Constituent Assembly contained the first and readiest choice among the men of ability whom France had in her bosom, it followed that the second Assembly could not be equal to the first in abundance of talent; but still the Legislative Assembly held in its ranks many men of no ordinary acquirements, and a few of a corresponding boldness and determination of character. A slight review of the parties into which it was divided, will show how much the influence of the crown was lowered in the scale.

There was no party remained which could be termed strictly or properly Royalist. Those who were attached to the old monarchy of France were now almost all exiles, and there were left but few even of that second class of more moderate and more reasonable Royalists, who desired to establish a free constitution on the basis of an effective monarchy, strong enough to protect the laws against license, but not sufficiently predominant to alter or overthrow them. Cazalès, whose chivalrous de-

fence of the nobility,—Maury, whose eloquent pleadings for the church,—had so often made an honourable but vain struggle against the advances of revolution, were now silent and absent, and the few feeble remnants of their party had ranged themselves with the Constitutionalists, who were so far favourers of monarchy as it made part of their favourite system —and no farther. La Fayette continued to be the organ of that party, and had assembled under his banners Duport, Barnave, Lameth, all of whom had striven to keep pace with the headlong spirit of the Revolution, but, being outstripped by more active and forward champions of the popular cause, now shifted ground, and formed a union with those who were disposed to maintain, that the present Constitution was adapted to all the purposes of free and effectual government, and that, by its creation, all farther revolutionary measures were virtually superseded.

In stern opposition to those admirers of the Constitution, stood two bodies of unequal numbers, strength, and efficacy; of which the first was determined that the Revolution should never stop until the downfall of the monarchy, while the second entertained the equally resolved purpose of urging these changes still farther onwards, to the total destruction of all civil order, and the establishment of a government in which terror and violence should be

the ruling principles, to be wielded by the hands of the demagogues who dared to nourish a scheme so nefarious. We have indicated the existence of both these parties in the first, or Constituent Assembly; but in the second, called the Legislative, they assumed a more decided form, and appeared united towards the abolition of royalty as a common end, though certain, when it was attained, to dispute with each other the use which was to be made of the victory. In the words of Shakspeare, they were determined

> To lay this Angiers even with the ground,
> Then, after, fight who should be king of it.

The first of these parties took its most common denomination from the Gironde, a department which sent most of its members to the Convention. Condorcet, dear to science, was one of this party, and it was often named from Brissot, another of its principal leaders. Its most distinguished champions were men bred as lawyers in the south of France, who had, by mutual flattery, and the habit of living much together, acquired no small portion of that self-conceit and overweening opinion of each others' talents, which may be frequently found among small provincial associations for political or literary purposes. Many had eloquence, and most of them a high fund of enthusiasm, which a classical education, and

their intimate communication with each other, where each idea was caught up, lauded, re-echoed, and enhanced, had exalted into a spirit of republican zeal. They doubtless had personal ambition, but in general it seems not to have been of a low or selfish character. Their aims were often honourable though visionary, and they marched with great courage towards their proposed goal, with the vain purpose of erecting a pure republic, in a state so disturbed as that of France, and by hands so polluted as those of their Jacobin associates. It will be recorded, however, to the disgrace of their pretensions to stern republican virtue, that the Girondists were willing to employ, for the accomplishment of their purpose, those base and guilty tools which afterwards effected their own destruction. They were for using the revolutionary means of insurrection and violence, until the republic should be established, and no longer; or, in the words of the satirist,

> For letting Rapine loose and Murther,
> To rage just so far, but no further;
> And setting all the land on fire
> To burn to a scantling, but no higher.

The Jacobins,—the second of these parties,—were allies of the Brissotins, with the ulterior purpose of urging the revolutionary force to the uttermost, but using as yet the shelter

of their republican mantle. Robespierre, who, by an affectation of a frugal and sequestered course of life, preserved among the multitude the title of the Incorruptible, might be considered as the head of the Jacobins, if they had indeed a leader more than wolves have, which tune their united voices to the cry of him who bays the loudest. Danton, inexorable as Robespierre himself, but less prudent, because he loved gold and pleasure as well as blood and power, was next in authority. Marat, who loved to talk of murder as soldiers do of battles; the wretched Collot d'Herbois, a broken-down play-actor; Chabot, an ex-capuchin; with many other men of desperate character, whose moderate talents were eked out by the most profligate effrontery, formed the advanced guard of this party, soiled with every species of crime, and accustomed to act their parts in the management of those dreadful insurrections, which had at once promoted and dishonoured the Revolution. It is needless to preserve from oblivion names such as Santerre and Hébert, distinguished for cruelty and villany above the other subaltern villains. Such was the party who, at the side of the Brissotins, stood prompt to storm the last bulwarks of the monarchy, reserving to themselves the secret determination, that the spoil should be all their own.

The force of these three parties was as variously composed as their principles. That of La Fayette, as we have repeatedly observed, lay amongst the better order of shopkeepers and citizens, and other proprietors, who had assumed arms for their own protection, and to maintain something like general good order. These composed the steadiest part of the National Guard, and, generally speaking, were at the devotion of their commandant, though his authority was resisted by them on some occasions, and seemed daily to grow more precarious. The Royalists might perhaps have added some force to the Constitutional party, but La Fayette did not now possess such an unsuspected character with the so called friends of freedom, as could permit him to use the obnoxious assistance of those who were termed its enemies. His high character as a military man still sustained an importance, which, nevertheless, was already somewhat on the wane.

The party of the Gironde had in their favour the theoretical amateurs of liberty and equality, young men, whose heated imaginations saw the Forum of ancient Rome in the gardens of the Palais Royal, and yielded a ready assent to whatsoever doctrine came recommended by a flourishing and eloquent peroration, and was rounded off in a sounding sentence, or a quaint apophthegm. The partisans of Brissot

had some interest in the southern departments, who had sent them to the capital, and conceived that they had a great deal more. They pretended that there existed in those districts a purer flame of freedom than in the metropolis itself, and held out, that Liberty, if expelled from Paris, would yet find refuge in a new republic, to be founded on the other side of the Loire. Such day-dreams did not escape the Jacobins, who carefully treasured them to be the apology of future violence, and finally twisted them into an accusation which bestowed on the Brissotins the odious name of Federalists, and charged them with an intention to dismember France, by splitting it into a league of petty commonwealths, like those of Holland and Switzerland.

The Brissotins had a point of union in the saloon of Madame Roland, wife to one of their number. The beauty, talents, courage, and accomplishments of this remarkable woman, pushed forward into public notice a husband of very middling abilities, and preserved a high influence over the association of philosophical rhapsodists, who hoped to oppose pikes with syllogisms, and to govern a powerful country by the discipline of an academy.

The substantial and dreadful support of the Jacobins lay in the Club so named, with the yet more violent association of Cordeliers, and their original affiliated societies, which reigned

paramount over those of the municipal bodies, which in most departments were fain to crouch under their stern and sanguinary dominion. This Club had more than once changed masters, for its principal and leading feature being the highest point of democratical ardour, it drove from its bosom in succession those who fell short of the utmost pitch of extravagant zeal for liberty and equality, manifested by the most uncompromising violence. The word *moderation* was as odious in this society as could have been that of slavery, and he who could affect the most exaggerated and outrageous strain of patriotism, was sure to outstrip their former leaders. Thus the Lameths took the guidance of the Club out of the hands of La Fayette; Robespierre and Marat wrenched the management from the Lameths; and, considering their pitch of extravagant ferocity, there was little chance of *their* losing it, unless an Avatar of the Evil Spirit had brought Satan himself to dispute the point in person.

The leaders, who were masters of this Club, had possession, as we have often remarked, of the master-keys of the passions of the populace, could raise a forest of pikes with one word, and unsheathe a thousand daggers with another. They directly and openly recommended the bloodiest and most ruffian-like actions, instead of those which, belonging to open and manly warfare, present something

that is generous even in the midst of violence. « Give me, » said the atrocious Marat, when instructing Barbaroux in his bloody science,— « Give me two hundred Neapolitans—the knife in their right hand, in their left a *muff*, to serve for a target—with these I will traverse France, and complete the revolution. » At the same lecture he made an exact calculation (for the monster was possessed of some science), showing in what manner two hundred and sixty thousand men might be put to death in one day. Such were the means, the men, and the plans of the Jacobins, which they were now, in the Legislative Assembly, to oppose to the lukewarm loyalty of the Constitutionalists, and, in the hour of need, to the fine-spun republican theories of the Brissotins. But ere we proceed in our review of the internal affairs of the nation, it becomes now necessary to glance at her external relations.

Hitherto France had acted alone in this dreadful tragedy, while the other nations of Europe looked on in amazement, which now began to give place to a desire of action. No part of public law is more subtle in argument than that which pretends to define the exact circumstances in which, according to the proper interpretation of the *Jus gentium*, one nation is at liberty, or called upon, to interfere in the internal concerns of another. If my next neighbour's house is on fire, I am not

only entitled, but obliged, by rules alike of prudence and humanity, to lend my aid to extinguish it; or if a cry of murder arises in his household, the support due to the law, and the protection of the innocent, will excuse my forcible entrance upon his premises. These are extreme cases, and easily decided; they have their parallels in the laws of nations, but they are of rare occurrence. But there lies between them and the general maxim, prohibiting the uncalled-for interference of one party in what primarily and principally concerns another, a whole *terra incognita* of special cases, in which it may be difficult to pronounce any satisfactory decision.

In the history of nations, however, little practical difficulty has been felt, for wherever the jurisconsults have found a Gordian knot, the sword of the sovereign has severed it without ceremony. The doubt has usually been decided on the practical questions, What benefit the neutral power is like to derive from his interference? and, Whether he possesses the power of using it effectually, and to his own advantage? In free countries, indeed, the public opinion must be listened to; but man is the same in every situation, and the same desire of aggrandizement, which induces an arbitrary monarch to shut his ears to the voice of justice, is equally powerful with senates and popular assemblies; and aggressions have been

as frequently made by republics and limited monarchs on the independence of their neighbours, as by those princes who have no bounds to their own royal pleasure. The gross and barefaced injustice of the partition of Poland had gone far to extinguish any remains of hesitation upon such subjects, and might be said to be a direct recognition of the right of the strongest. There would not, therefore, have wanted pretexts for interference in the affairs of France, of the nations around her, had any of them been at the time capable of benefiting by the supposed opportunity.

England, the rival of France, might, from the example of that country, have exercised a right of interfering with her domestic concerns, in requital of the aid which she afforded to the Americans; but besides that the publicity of the parliamentary debates must compel the most ambitious British minister to maintain at least an appearance of respect to the rights of other countries, England was herself much divided upon the subject of the French Revolution.

This was not the case when the eventful scene first commenced. We believe that the first display of light, reason, and rational liberty in France, was hailed as a day-spring through all Britain, and that there were few if any in that country, who did not feel their hearts animated and enlarged by seeing such a great and

noble nation throwing aside the fetters, which at once restrained and dishonoured them, and assuming the attitude, language, and spirit of a free people.. All men's thoughts and eyes were bent on struggles, which seemed to promise the regeneration of a mighty country, and the British generally felt as if days of old hate and mutual rivalry would thereafter be forgotten, and that in future the similarity of liberal institutions, and the possession of a just portion of rational liberty on either side, would throw kindness and cordiality into the intercourse between the two countries, since France would no longer have ground to contemn England as a country of seditious and sullen clowns, or Britain to despise France as a nation of willing slaves.

This universal sympathy was not removed by the forcible capture of the Bastille, and the violences of the people on that occasion. The name of that fortress was so unpopular, as to palliate and apologize for the excesses which took place on its fall, and it was not to be expected that a people so long oppressed, when exerting their power for the first time, should be limited by the strict bounds of moderation. But in England there always have been, and must exist, two parties of politicians, who will not long continue to regard events of such an interesting nature with similar sensations.

The revolutionists of France were naturally

desirous to obtain the applause of the elder-born of freedom, and the societies in Britain, which assumed the character of the peculiar admirers and protectors of liberty, conceived themselves obliged to extend their countenance to the changes in the neighbouring nation. Hence there arose a great intercourse between the clubs and self-constituted bodies in Britain, which assumed the extension of popular freedom as the basis of their association, and the revolutionists in France, who were realizing the systems of philosophical theorists upon the same ground. Warm tributes of applause were transmitted from several of these associations; the ambassadors sent to convey them were received with great distinction by the National Assembly; and the urbane intercourse which took place on these occasions, led to exaggerated admiration of the French system on the part of those, who had thus unexpectedly become the medium of intercourse between a great nation and a few private societies. The latter were gradually induced to form unfavourable comparisons betwixt the Temple of French Freedom, built, as it seemed to them, upon the most perfect principles of symmetry and uniformity, and that in which the goddess had been long worshipped in England, and which, on the contrast, appeared to them like an ancient edifice constructed in barbaric times, and incongruously encumbered

with Gothic ornaments and emblems, which modern political architects had discarded. But these political sages overlooked the important circumstance, that the buttresses, which seemed in some respects incumbrances to the English edifice, might, on examination, be found to add to its stability; and that in fact they furnished evidence to show, that the venerable pile was built with cement fitted to endure the test of ages, while that of France, constructed of lath daubed with untempered mortar, like the pageants she exhibited on the revolutionary festivals, was only calculated to be the wonder of a day.

The earnest admiration of either party of the state is sure in England to be balanced by the censure of the other, and leads to an immediate trial of strength betwixt them. The popular side is always the more loud, the more active, the more imposing of the two contending parties. It is formidable, from the body of talents which it exhibits (for those ambitious of distinction are usually friends to innovation), and from the unanimity and vigour with which it can wield them. There may be, and indeed always are, great differences in the point to which each leader is desirous to carry reformation; but they are unanimous in desiring its commencement. The Opposition, also, as it is usually termed, has always included several of the high aristocracy of the country,

whose names ennoble their rank, and whose large fortunes are a pledge, that they will, for their own sakes, be a check upon eager and violent experimentalists. The Whigs, moreover, have the means of influencing assemblies of the lower orders, to whom the name of liberty is, and ought to be dear, since it is the privilege which must console them for narrow circumstances and inferiority of condition; and these means the party, so called, often use successfully, always with industry and assiduity.

The counterbalance to this active and powerful body is to be found, speaking generally, in the higher classes at large—the great mass of nobility and gentry—the clergy of the Established Church—the superior branches of the law—the wealthier of the commercial classes—and the bulk of those who have property to lose, and are afraid of endangering it. This body is like the Ban of the Germanic empire, a formidable force, but slow and diffident in its operations, and requiring the stimulus of sudden alarm to call it into effective exercise. To one or other of these great national parties, every Englishman, of education enough to form an opinion, professes to belong; with a perfect understanding on the part of all men of sense and probity, that the general purpose is to ballast the vessel of the state, not to overset it, and that it becomes a state-treason in

any one to follow his party when they carry their doctrines to extremity.

From the nature of this grand national division it follows, that the side which is most popular should be prompt in adopting theories, and eager in recommending measures of alteration and improvement. It is by such measures that men of talents rise into importance, and by such that the popular part of the constitution is maintained in its integrity. The other party is no less useful, by opposing to each successive attempt at innovation the delays of form, the doubts of experience, the prejudices of rank and condition, legal objections, and the weight of ancient and established practice. Thus, measures of a doubtful tendency are severely scrutinized in Parliament, and if at length adopted, it is only when public opinion has long declared in their favour, and when, men's minds having become habituated to the discussion, their introduction into our system cannot produce the violent effect of absolute novelty. If there were no Whigs, our constitution would fall to pieces for want of repair; if there were no Tories, it would be broken in the course of a succession of rash and venturous experiments.

It followed as a matter of course, that the Whigs of Britain looked with complacence, the Tories with jealousy, upon the progress of the new principles in France; but the latter

had a powerful and unexpected auxiliary in the person of Edmund Burke, whose « Reflections on the French Revolution» had the most striking effect on the public mind of any work in our time. There was something exaggerated at all times in the character as well as the eloquence of that great man; and upon reading at this distance of time his celebrated composition, it must be confessed that the colours he has used in painting the extravagances of the Revolution ought to have been softened, by considering the peculiar state of a country, which, long labouring under despotism, is suddenly restored to the possession of unembarrassed license. On the other hand, no political prophet ever viewed futurity with a surer ken. He knew how to detect the secret purpose of the various successive tribes of revolutionists, and saw in the constitution the future republic; in the republic the reign of anarchy; from anarchy he predicted military despotism, and from military despotism, last to be fulfilled, and hardest to be believed, he prophesied the late but secure resurrection of the legitimate monarchy. Above all, when the cupidity of the French rulers aspired no farther than the forcible possession of Avignon and the Venaissin territories, he foretold their purpose of extending the empire of France by means of her new political theories, and, under pretext of propagating the principles of freedom,

her project of assailing with her arms the states, whose subjects had been already seduced by her doctrines.

The work of Burke raised a thousand enemies to the French Revolution, who had before looked upon it with favour, or at least with indifference. A very large portion of the talents and aristocracy of the opposition party followed Burke into the ranks of the ministry, who saw with pleasure a member, noted for his zeal in the cause of the Americans, become an avowed enemy of the French Revolution, and with equal satisfaction heard him use arguments, which might in their own mouths have assumed an obnoxious and suspicious character.

But the sweeping terms in which the author reprobated all attempts at state-reformation, in which he had himself been at one time so powerful an agent, subjected him to the charge of inconsistency among his late friends, many of whom, and Fox in particular, declared themselves favourable to the progress of the Revolution in France, though they did not pretend to excuse its excesses. Out of Parliament it met more unlimited applause; for England, as well as France, had talent impatient of obscurity, ardour which demanded employment, ambition which sought distinction, and men of headlong passions, who expected in a new order of things more unlimited means of

indulging them. The middling classes were open in England as elsewhere, though not perhaps so much so, to the tempting offer of increased power and importance; and the populace of London and other large towns loved license as well as the sans culottes of France. Hence the division of the country into aristocrats and democrats, the introduction of political hatred into the bosom of families, and the dissolution of many a band of friendship which had stood the strain of a life-time. One part of the kingdom looked upon the other with the stern and relentless glance of keepers who are restraining madmen, while the others bent on them the furious glare of madmen conspiring revenge on their keepers.

From this period the progress of the French Revolution seemed in England like a play presented upon the stage, where two contending factions divide the audience, and hiss or applaud as much from party spirit as from real critical judgment, while every instant increases the probability that they will try the question by actual force.

Still, though the nation was thus divided on account of French politics, England and France observed the usual rules of amity, and it seemed that the English were more likely to wage hostility with each other than to declare war against France.

There was, in other kingdoms and states

upon the Continent, the same diversity of feeling, respecting the Revolution, which divided England. The favour of the lower and unprivileged classes, in Germany especially, was the more fixed upon the progress of the French Revolution, because they lingered under the same incapacities, from which the changes in France had delivered the Commons, or Third Estate, of that country. Thus far their partiality was not only innocent, but praiseworthy. It is as natural for a man to desire the liberty from which he is unjustly excluded, as it is for those who are in an apartment, where the air is polluted, to wish for the wholesome atmosphere.

Unhappily, these justifiable desires were connected with others of a description less harmless and beneficial. The French Revolution had proclaimed war on castles, as well as peace to cottages. Its doctrine and practice held out the privileged classes in every country as the natural tyrants and oppressors of the poor, whom it encouraged by the thousand tongues of its declaimers to pull down their thrones, overthrow their altars, renounce the empire of God above, and of kings below, and arise, like regenerated France, alike from thraldom and from superstition. And such opinions, calling upon the other nations of Europe to follow them in their democratic career, were not only trumpeted forth in all affi-

liated clubs of the Jacobins, whose influence in the National Assembly was formidable, but were formally recognized by that body itself upon an occasion, which, but for the momentous omen it presented, might have been considered as the most ridiculous scene ever gravely acted before the legislators of a great nation.

There was in Paris a native of Prussia, an exile from his country, whose brain, none of the soundest by nature, seems to have been affected by the progress of the Revolution, as that of ordinary madmen is said to be influenced by the increase of the moon. This personage having become disgusted with his baptismal name, had adopted that of the Scythian philosopher, and, uniting it with his own Teutonic family appellation, entitled himself—« Anacharsis Klootz, Orator of the Human Race.»

It could hardly be expected, that the assumption of such a title should remain undistinguished by some supreme act of folly. Accordingly, the self-dubbed Anacharsis set on foot a procession, which was intended to exhibit the representatives of delegates from all nations upon earth, to assist at the Feast of the Federation, of the 14th July, 1790, by which the French nation proposed to celebrate the Revolution. In recruiting his troops, the Orator easily picked up a few vagabonds of dif-

ferent countries in Paris; but as Chaldeans, Illinois, and Siberians, are not so common, the delegates of those more distant tribes were chosen among the rabble of the city, and subsidized at the rate of about twelve francs each. We are sorry we cannot tell whether the personage, whose dignity was much insisted upon as « a Miltonic Englishman, » was genuine, or of Parisian manufacture. If the last, he must have been worth seeing.

Anacharsis Klootz, having got his ragged regiment equipped in costume at the expense of the refuse of some theatrical wardrobe, conducted them in solemn procession to the bar of the National Assembly, presented them as the representatives of all the nations on earth, awakened to a sense of their debased situation by the choral voices of twenty-five millions of freemen, and demanding that the sovereignty of the people should be acknowledged, and their oppressors destroyed, through all the universe, as well as in France.

So far this absurd scene was the extravagance of a mere madman, and if the Assembly had sent Anacharsis to Bedlam, and his train to the Bicêtre, it would have ended as such a farce ought to have done. But *the President, in the name of the Assembly,* Monsieur de Menou (the same, we believe, who afterwards turned Turk when in Egypt), applauded the zeal of the Orator, and received the homage

of his grotesque attendants as if they had been what they pretended, the deputies of the four quarters of the globe. To raise the jest to the highest, Alexander Lameth proposed,—as the feelings of these august pilgrims must necessarily be hurt to see, in the land of freedom, those kneeling figures representing conquered nations, which surround the statue of Louis XIV.,—that, from respect to this body of charlatans, these figures should be forthwith demolished. This was done accordingly, and the destruction of these symbols was regarded as a testimony of the assistance which France was ready to render such states as should require it, for following in the revolutionary course. The scene, laughable in itself, became serious when its import was considered, and went far to persuade the governments of the neighbouring countries, that the purpose of France was to revolutionize Europe, and spread the reign of liberty and equality over all the civilized nations of the globe. Hopes so flattering as these, which should assign to the commons not merely freedom from unjust restraints and disqualifications (and that granted with reserve, and only in proportion as they became qualified to use it with advantage), but their hour of command and sovereignty, with the privilege of retaliation on those who had so long kept them in bondage, were sure to find a general good reception among all to

whom they were addressed, in whatsoever country; while, on the contrary, the fears of existing governments for the propagation of doctrines so seductive in themselves, and which France seemed apparently prepared to support with arms, were excited in an equal proportion.

It is true that the National Assembly had formally declared that France renounced the unphilosophical practices of extending her limits by conquest, but although this disavowal spoke to the ear, it was contradicted by the annexation of those desirable possessions, the ancient city of Avignon, and the district called the Comtat Venaissin, to the kingdom of France; while the principle on which the annexation was determined on seemed equally applicable in all similar cases.

A dispute had broken out betwixt the aristocrats and democrats in the town and province in question; blood had flowed; a part of the population had demanded to become citizens of regenerated France. Would it be worthy of the Protectress of Liberty, said the advocates for the annexation, to repel from her bosom supplicants, who panted to share the freedom they had achieved? And so Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin were declared lawful prize, and *reunited* to France (so went the phrase), as Napoleon afterwards reunited the broken fragments of the empire of Charle-

magne. The prescient eye of Burke easily detected, in these petty and surreptitious acquisitions, the gigantic plan by which France afterwards encircled herself by dependent states, which, while termed allies and auxiliaries, were in fact her most devoted subjects, and the governments of which changed their character from monarchical to popular, like the Great Nation.

The princes at the head of despotic governments were, of course, most interested in putting an end, if it were possible, to the present Revolution of France, and extinguishing a flame which appeared so threatening to its neighbours. Yet there was a long hesitation ere any thing to this purpose was attempted. Austria, whom the matter concerned as so near an ally of France, was slow ere she made any decisive step towards hostility. The Emperor Joseph was too much embroiled by the dissensions which he had provoked in the Netherlands, to involve himself in war with France. His successor, Leopold, had been always reckoned to belong to the philosophical party. He put down, without much trouble, the insurrection which had nearly cost his brother the dominion of Flanders, and as he used the victory with moderation, it seemed unlikely that the tranquillity of his government should again be disturbed. Still, it would have been hazardous to expose the allegiance

of the subjects, so newly restored to order, to the temptations which must have opened to the Flemings by engaging in a war with France, and Leopold, far from seeking for a ground of quarrel with the favourers of the Revolution, entered into friendly relations with the government which they established; and, with anxiety, doubtless, for the safety of his brother-in-law, and an earnest desire to see the government of France placed on something like a steady footing, the Emperor continued in amicable terms with the existing rulers of that country down till his death. Francis, his successor, for some time seemed to adopt the same pacific policy.

Prussia, justly proud of her noble army, her veteran commanders, and the bequest of military fame left her by the Great Frederick, was more eager than Austria to adopt what began to be called the cause of Kings and Nobles, though the sovereign of the latter kingdom was so nearly connected with the unfortunate Louis. Frederick William had been taught to despise revolutionary movements by his cheap victory over the Dutch democracy, while the resistance of the Low Countries had induced the Austrians to dread such explosions.

Russia declared herself hostile to the French Revolution, but hazarded no effective step against them. The King of Sweden, animated by the adventurous character which made

Gustavus, and after him Charles, sally forth from their frozen realms to influence the fates of Europe, showed the strongest disposition to play the same part, though the limited state of his resources rendered his valour almost nugatory.

Thus, while so many increasing discontents and suspicions showed that a decision by arms became every day more inevitable, Europe seemed still reluctant to commence the fatal encounter, as if the world had anticipated the long duration of the dreadful struggle, and the millions of lives which it must cost to bring it to a termination.

There can be no doubt that the emigration of the French princes, followed by a great part of the nobles of France, a step ill-judged in itself, as removing beyond the frontiers of the country all those most devotedly interested in the preservation of the monarchy, had the utmost effect in precipitating the impending hostilities. The presence of so many noble exiles, the respect and sympathy which their misfortunes excited in those of the same rank, the exaggerated accounts which they gave of their own consequence, above all, the fear that the revolutionary spirit should extend beyond the limits of France, and work the same effects in other nations, produced through the whole aristocracy of Germany a general desire to restore them to their country and to their

rights by the force of arms, and to extinguish by main force a spirit which seemed destined to wage war against all established governments, and to abolish the privileges which they recognized in their higher classes.

The state of the expatriated French clergy, driven from their home, and deprived of their means of subsistence, because they refused an oath imposed contrary to their ecclesiastical vows, and to their conscience, added religious zeal to the general interest excited by the spectacle, yet new to Europe, of thousands of nobility and clergy compelled to forsake their country, and take refuge among aliens.

Several petty princes of the empire made a show of levying forces, and complained of a breach of public faith, from the forfeiture of rights which individual princes of the Germanic body possessed in Alsace and Lorraine, and which, though sanctioned by the treaty of Westphalia, the National Assembly had not deemed worthy of exception from their sweeping abolition of feudal tenures. The emigrants formed themselves into armed corps at Trèves and elsewhere, in which the noblest youths in France carried arms as privates, and which, if their number and resources had been in any proportion to their zeal and courage, were qualified to bear a distinguished part in deciding the destinies of the nation. Thus united, they gave way but too much to the

natural feelings of their rank and country, menaced the land from which they had emigrated, and boasted aloud that it needed but one thrust (*botte*) of an Austrian general, to parry and pay home all the decrees of the National Assembly. This ill-timed anticipation of success was founded in a great measure on the disorganization of the French army, which had been begun by the decay of discipline during the progress of the Revolution, and was supposed to be rendered complete by the emigration of such numbers of officers as had joined the princes and their standards. It was yet to be learned how soon such situations can be filled up, from the zeal and talent always found among the lower classes, when critical circumstances offer a reward to ambition.

Yet, while confident of success, the position of the emigrants was far from being flattering. Notwithstanding their most zealous exertions, the princes found their interest with foreign courts unable to bring either kings or ministers willingly or hastily to the point which they desired. The nearest approach was by the declaration of Pilnitz,[1] in which with, much diplomatical caution, the Emperor and King of Prussia announced the interest which they took in the actual condition of the King of France; and intimated that, supposing

[1] 27th August, 1791.

the other nations appealed to should entertain feelings of the same kind, they would, conjoined with those other powers, use the most efficacious means to place Louis in a situation to establish in his dominions, on the basis of the most perfect liberty, a monarchical government, suitable to the rights of the sovereign, and the welfare of the people.

This implied threat, which was to be conditionally carried into effect in case other powers not named should entertain the same sentiments with the two sovereigns by whom it was issued, was well calculated to irritate, but far too vague to intimidate such a nation as France. It showed the desire to wound, but showed it accompanied by the fear to strike; and, instead of inspiring respect, only awakened indignation mingled with contempt.

The emigrants were generally represented among the people of France as men who, to recover their own vain privileges, were willing to lead a host of foreigners into the bosom of their country; and lest some sympathy with their situation, as men suffering for the cause to which they had devoted themselves, and stimulated by anxiety for the fate of their imprisoned King, should have moderated the severity of this judgment, forgery was employed to render their communication with the foreign monarchs still more odious and unpopular.

The secret articles of a pretended treaty were referred to, by which it was alleged that Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois had agreed to a dismemberment of France; Lorraine and Alsace being to be restored to Austria, in consequence of her entering into the counter-revolutionary league. The date of this supposed treaty was first placed at Pavia, and afterwards transferred to Pilnitz; but although it was at one time assumed as a real document in the British House of Commons, it is now generally allowed to have had no existence.[1] In the mean while, as a calumny well adapted to the prejudices of the time, the belief in such a secret compact became generally current, and excited the utmost indignation against the selfish invaders, and against the exiles, who were supposed willing to dismember their native country, rather than submit to a change in its constitution adverse to their own selfish interests.

A great deal of this new load of unpopularity was transferred to the account of the unfortunate Louis, who was supposed to instigate and support in private the attempts of his brothers for engaging foreign courts in his favour, while the Queen, from her relationship to the Emperor of Austria, was univer-

[1] See two articles on the pretended treaties of Pavia and Pilnitz, in the Anti-jacobin newspaper. They were, we believe, written by the late Mr Pitt.

sally represented as a fury, urging him to revenge her loss of power on the rebellious people of France. An Austrian committee was talked of as managing the correspondence between these royal persons, on the one part, and the foreign courts and emigrant princes on the other. This was totally groundless; but it is probable and natural that some intercourse was maintained between Louis and his brothers, as, though their warlike schemes suited the King's temper too little, he might wish to derive advantage from the dread which it was vainly supposed their preparations would inspire. The royal pair were indeed in a situation so disastrous, that they might have been excused for soliciting rescue by almost any means. But, in fact, Louis and Leopold seem to have agreed in the same system of temporizing politics. Their correspondence, as far as can be judged from the letters of De Lessart, Louis's trusted minister for foreign affairs, seems always to point to a middle course; that of suffering the Constitution of France to remain such as it had been chosen by the people, and sanctioned by the National Assembly, while the ministers attempted, by the influence of fear of dangers from abroad, to prevent any future assaults upon the power of the Crown, and especially against the King's person. On condition that such further aggression should be abstained

from, the Emperor seems to have been willing to prohibit the mustering of the emigrant forces in his dominions. But Leopold demanded that, on their part, the French Nation should release themselves from the clubs of Jacobins and Cordeliers (another assembly of the same nature), which, pretending to be no more than private associations, without public character or responsibility, nevertheless dictated to the National Assembly, the King, and all France, in virtue of the power of exciting the insurrectional movements, by which their denunciations and proposed revolutions had been as regularly seconded, as the flash is followed by the thunderbolt.

On the death of Leopold, and the succession of his brother Francis to the imperial throne, the disposition of Austria became much more turned towards war. It became the object of Francis to overcome the Revolutionists, and prevent, if possible, the impending fate of the royal family. In adopting these warlike counsels, the mind of the new Emperor was much influenced by the desire of Prussia to take the field. Indeed the condition of the royal family, which became every day more precarious, seemed to both powers to indicate and authorize hostile measures, and they were at no pains to conceal their sentiments. It is not probable that peace would have remained long unbroken, unless some change of an unex-

pected and unhoped-for character, in favour of royalty, had taken place in France; but after all the menaces which had been made by the foreign powers, it was France herself who, to the surprise of all Europe, first resorted to arms. The ostensible reason was, that, in declaring war, she only anticipated, as became a brave and generous nation, the commencement of hostilities which Austria had menaced. But each party in the state had its own private views for concurring in a measure, which, at the time, seemed of a very audacious character.

La Fayette now felt his influence in the National Guard of Paris was greatly on the wane. With the democrats he was regarded as a denounced and devoted man, for having employed the armed force to disperse the people in the Champ de Mars, upon the 17th of July, 1791. Those who countenanced him on that occasion were Parisian citizens of substance and property, but timorous, even from the very consciousness of their wealth, and unwilling, either for the sake of La Fayette, or the Constitution which he patronized, to expose themselves to be denounced by furious demagogues, or pillaged by the hordes of robbers and assassins whom they had at their disposal. This is the natural progress in revolutions. While order continues, property has always the superior influence over those who

may be desirous of infringing the public peace; but when law and order are in a great measure destroyed, the wealthy are too much disposed to seek, in submission, or change of party, the means of securing themselves and their fortunes. The property which, in ordinary times, renders its owners bold, becomes, in those of imminent danger, the cause of their selfish cowardice. La Fayette tried, however, one decisive experiment, to ascertain what share remained of his once predominant influence over the Parisians. He stood an election for the mayoralty of Paris against Pétion, a person attached to the Brissotin, or Republican faction, and the latter was preferred. Unsuccessful in this attempt, La Fayette became desirous of foreign war. A soldier, and an approved one, he hoped his fortune would not desert him, and that at the head of armies which he trusted to render victorious over the public enemy, he might have a better chance of being listened to by those factions who began to hold in disrespect the red flag, and the decaying efforts of the National Guard of Paris; and thus gaining the power of once more enforcing submission to the Constitution, which he had so large a share in creating. Unquestionably also, La Fayette remembered the ardour of the French for national glory, and welcomed the thoughts of shifting the scene to combat against a public and avowed enemy,

from his obscure and unsatisfactory struggle with the clubs of Paris. La Fayette, therefore, desired war, and was followed in his opinion by most of the Constitutional party.

The Girondists were not less eager for a declaration of hostilities. Either the King must, in that case, place his veto upon the measure, or he must denounce hostilities against his brother-in-law and his brothers, subjecting himself to all the suspicions of bad faith which such a measure inferred. If the arms of the nation were victorious, the risk of a revolution in favour of royalty by insurrections within, or invasions from without the kingdom, was ended at once and for ever. And if the foreigners obtained advantages, it would be easy to turn the unpopularity of the defeat upon the monarch, and upon the Constitutionalists, who had insisted, and did still insist, on retaining him as the ostensible head of the executive government.

The Jacobins, those whose uniform object it was to keep the impulse of forcible and revolutionary measures in constant action, seemed to be divided among themselves on the great question of war or peace. Robespierre himself struggled, in the Club, against the declaration of hostilities, probably because he wished the Brissotins to take all the responsibility of that hazardous measure, secure be-

forehand to share the advantage which it might afford those Republicans against the King and Constitutionalists. He took care that Louis should profit nothing by the manner in which he pleaded the cause of justice and humanity. He affected to prophesy disasters to the ill-provided and ill-disciplined armies of France, and cast the blame beforehand on the known treachery of the King and the Royalists, the arbitrary designs of La Fayette and the Constitutionaliststs, and the doubtful patriotism of Brissot and Condorcet. His arguments retarded, though they could not stop, the declaration of war which probably they were not intended seriously to prevent; and the most violent and sanguinary of men obtained a temporary character for love of humanity, by adding hypocrisy to his other vices. The Jacobins in general, notwithstanding Robespierre's remonstrances, moved by the same motives which operated with the Brissotins, declared ultimately in favour of hostilities.

The resolution for war, therefore, predominated in the Assembly, and two preparatory measures served, as it were, to sound the intentions of the King on the subject, and to ascertain how far he was disposed to adhere to the Constitutional government which he had accepted, against those who, in his name, seemed prepared by force of arms to restore the

old system of monarchy. Two decrees were passed against the emigrants in the Assembly.[1] The first was directed against the King's brother, and summoned Xavier Stanislas, Prince of France, to return into France in two months, upon pain of forfeiting his right to the regency. The King consented to this decree—he could not, indeed, dissent from it with consistency, being, as he had consented to be, the holder of the crown under a constitution, against which his exiled brother had publicly declared war. The second decree denounced death against all emigrants who should be found assembled in arms on the 1st of January next. The right of a nation to punish with extreme pains those of its native subjects who bear arms against her has never been disputed. But although on great changes of the state, the vanquished party, when essaying a second struggle, stand in the relation of rebels against the existing government, yet there is generally wisdom, as well as humanity, in delaying to assert this right in its rigour, until such a period shall have elapsed, as shall at once have established the new government in a confirmed state of possession, and given those attached to the old one time to forget their habits and predilections in its favour.

[1] 9th November, 1791.

Under this defence, Louis ventured to use the sole constitutional weapon with which he was intrusted. He refused his consent to the decree. Sensible of the unpopularity attending this rejection, the King endeavoured to qualify it, by issuing a severe proclamation against the emigrants, countermanding their proceedings;—which was only considered as an act of dissimulation and hypocrisy.

The decree last proposed jarred necessarily on the heart and sensibility of Louis—the next affected his religious scruples. The National Assembly had produced a schism in the church, by imposing on the clergy a constitutional oath, inconsistent with their religious vows. The philosophers in the present Legislative Body, with all the intolerance which they were in the habit of objecting against the catholic church, resolved to render the breach irreparable.

They had, they thought, the opportunity of striking a death's blow at the religion of the state, and they remembered that the watchword applied by the Encyclopedists to christianity, had been *Écrasez l'infame.* The proposed decree bore, that such priests as refused the Constitutional oath should forfeit the pension allowed them for subsistence, when the state seized upon the estates of the clergy; that they should be put into a state of surveillance, in the several departments where they

resided, and banished from France the instant they excited any religious dissensions.

A prince, with the genuine principles of philosophy, would have rejected this law as unjust and intolerant; but Louis had stronger motives to interpose his constitutional *Veto*, as a catholic christian, whose conscience would not permit him to assent to the persecution of the faithful servants of his church. He refused his assent to this decree also.

In attempting to shelter the emigrants and the recusant churchmen, the King only rendered himself the more immediate object of the popular resentment. His compassion for the former was probably mingled with a secret wish, that the success of their arms might relieve him from his present restraint; at any rate, it was a motive easily imputed and difficult to be disproved. He was, therefore, represented to his people as in close union with the bands of exiled Frenchmen, who menaced the frontiers of the kingdom, and were about to accompany the foreign armies on their march to the metropolis. The royal rejection of the decree against the orthodox clergy was imputed to Louis's superstition, and his desire of rebuilding an ancient Gothic hierarchy unworthy of an enlightened age. In short, that was now made manifest, which few wise men had ever doubted, namely, that so soon as the King should avail himself of his constitutional

right, in resistance to the popular will, he was sure to incur the risk of losing both his crown and life.

Meantime this danger was accelerated by the consequences of a dissension in the royal cabinet. It will scarce be believed, that situations in the ministry of France, so precarious in its tenure, so dangerous in its possession, so enfeebled in its authority, should have been even at this time the object of ambition; and that to possess such momentary and doubtful eminence, men, and wise men too, employed all the usual arts of intrigue and circumvention, by which rival statesmen, under settled governments and in peaceful times, endeavour to undermine and supplant each other. We have heard of criminals in the Scottish Highlands, who asserted with obstinacy the dignity of their clans, when the only test of pre-eminence was the priority of execution. We have read, too, of the fatal raft, where shipwrecked men in the midst of the Atlantic contended together with mortal strife for equally useless preferences. But neither case is equal in extravagance to the conduct of those rivals, who struggled for power in the cabinet of Louis XVI. in 1792, when, take what party they would, the jealousy of the Assembly, and the far more fatal proscription of the Jacobins, was sure to be the reward of their labours. So, however, it was, and the fact serves to show,

that a day of power is more valuable in the eyes of ambition, than a life-time of ease and safety.

De Lessart, the Minister of Foreign Affairs already mentioned, had wished to avoid war, and had fed Leopold and his ministers with hopes, that the King would be able to establish a constitutional power superior to that of the dreadful Jacobins. The Comte de Narbonne, on the other side, being Minister of War, was desirous to forward the views of La Fayette, who, as we have said, longed to be at the head of the army. To obtain his rival's disgrace, Narbonne combined with La Fayette and other generals to make public the opposition which De Lessart and a majority of the cabinet ministers had opposed to the declaration of hostilities. Louis, justly incensed at an appeal to the public from the interior of his own cabinet, displaced Narbonne.

The Legislative Body immediately fell on De Lessart. He was called to stand on his defence, and imprudently laid before the Assembly his correspondence with Kaunitz, the Austrian minister. In their communications De Lessart and Kaunitz had spoken with respect of the Constitution, and with moderation even of their most obnoxious measures; but they had reprobated the violence of the Jacobins and Cordeliers, and stigmatized the usurpations of those clubs over the constitutional

authorities of the state, whom they openly insulted and controlled. These moderate sentiments formed the real source of De Lessart's fall. He was attacked on all sides—by the party of Narbonne and his friends from rivalry—by Brissot and his followers from policy, and in order to remove a minister too much of a royalist for their purpose—by the Jacobins, from hatred and revenge. Yet when Brissot condescended upon the following evidence of his guilt, argument and testimony against him must have indeed been scarce. De Lessart, with the view of representing the present affairs of France under the most softened point of view to the Emperor, had assured him that the Constitution of 1791 was firmly adhered to by a *majority* of the nation. «Hear the atrocious calumniator!» said the accuser. «The inference is plain. He dares to insinuate the existence of a minority, which is not attached to the Constitution.»[1] Another accusation,

[1] This strange argument reminds us of an Essay read before a literary society in dispraise of the east wind, which the author supported by quotations from every poem or popular work, in which Eurus is the subject of invective. The learned auditors sustained the first part of this infliction with becoming fortitude, but declined submitting to the second, understanding that the accomplished author had there fortified himself by the numerous testimonies of almost all poets in favour of the west, and which, with logic similar to that of Monsieur Brissot

which in like manner was adopted as valid by the acclamation of the Assembly, was formed thus. A most horrible massacre had taken place during the tumults which attended the union of Avignon with the kingdom of France. Vergniaud, the friend and colleague of Brissot, alleged, that if the decree of union had been early enough sent to Avignon, the dissensions would not have taken place, and he charged upon the unhappy De Lessart, that he had not instantly transmitted the official intelligence. Now the decree of reunion was, as the orator knew, delayed on account of the King's scruples to accede to what seemed an invasion of the territory of the church; and, at any rate, it could no more have prevented the massacre of Avignon, which was conducted by that same Jourdan, called Coupe-tête, the Bearded Man of the march to Versailles, than the subsequent massacre of Paris, perpetrated by similar agents. The orator well knew this; yet, with eloquence as false as his logic, he summoned the ghosts of the murdered from the glacière, in which their mangled remains had been piled, to bear witness against the minister, to whose culpable neglect they owed their untimely fate. All the while he was imploring for justice on the head of a man, who was undeniably ignorant

in the text, he regarded as indirect testimony against the east wind

and innocent of the crime, Vergniaud and his friends secretly meditated extending the mantle of safety over the actual perpetrators of the massacre, by a decree of amnesty; so that the whole charge against De Lessart can only be termed a mixture of hypocrisy and cruelty. In the course of the same discussion, Gonchon, an orator of the suburb of Saint Antoine, in which lay the strength of the Jacobin interest, had already pronounced sentence in the cause, at the very bar of the Assembly which was engaged in trying it. « Royalty may be struck out of the Constitution, » said the demagogue, « but the unity of the Legislative Body defies the touch of time. Courtiers, ministers, kings, and their civil lists, may pass away, but the sovereignty of the people, and the pikes which enforce it, are perpetual. »

This was touching the root of the matter. De Lessart was a royalist, though a timid and cautious one, and he was to be punished as an example to such ministers as should dare to attach themselves to their sovereign and his personal interest. A decree of accusation was passed against him, and he was sent to Orleans to be tried before the High Court there. Other Royalists of distinction were committed to the same prison, and, in the fatal month of September, 1792, were involved in the same dreadful fate.

Pétion, the Mayor of Paris, appeared next

day at the bar, at the head of the municipality, to congratulate the Assembly on a great act of justice, which he declared resembled one of those thunder-storms by which nature purifies the atmosphere from noxious vapours. The ministry was dissolved by this severe blow on one of the wisest, at least one of the most moderate, of its members. Narbonne, and the Constitutional party who had espoused his cause, were soon made sensible that he or they were to gain nothing by the impeachment, to which their intrigues led the way. Their claims to share the spoils of the displaced ministry were passed over with contempt, and the King was compelled, in order to have the least chance of obtaining a hearing from the Assembly, to select his ministers from the Brissotin, or Girondist faction, who, though averse to the existence of a monarchy, and desiring a republic instead, had still somewhat more of principle and morals than the mere Revolutionists and Jacobins, who were altogether destitute of both.

With the fall of De Lessart, all chance of peace vanished, as indeed it had been gradually disappearing before that event. The demands of the Austrian court went now, when fully explained, so far back upon the Revolution, that a peace negotiated upon such terms must have laid France and all its various parties (with the exception, perhaps, of a few of

the first Assembly) at the foot of the sovereign, and, what might be more dangerous, at the mercy of the restored emigrants. The Emperor demanded the establishment of monarchy in France, on the basis of the Royal Declaration of 23d June, 1789, which had been generally rejected by the Tiers État when offered to them by the King. He farther demanded the restoration of the effects of the Church, and that the German princes having rights in Alsace and Lorraine should be replaced in those rights, agreeably to the treaty of Westphalia.

The Legislative Assembly received these extravagant terms as an insult on the national dignity; and the King, whatever might be his sentiments as an individual, could not, on this occasion, dispense with the duty his office as Constitutional Monarch imposed on him.—Louis, therefore, had the melancholy task of[1] proposing to an Assembly, filled with the enemies of his throne and person, a declaration of war against his brother-in-law the Emperor, in his capacity of King of Hungary and Bohemia, involving, as matter of course, a civil war with his own two brothers, who had taken the field at the head of that part of his subjects from birth and principle the most enthusiastically devoted to their sovereign's person, and

[1] 20th April, 1792.

who, if they had faults towards France, had committed them in love to him.

The proposal was speedily agreed to by the Assembly; for the Constitutionalists saw their best remaining chance for power was by obtaining victory on the frontiers,—the Girondists had need of war, as what must necessarily lead the way to an alteration in the constitution, and the laying aside the regal government,—and the Jacobins, whose chief, Robespierre, had just objected enough to give him the character and credit of a prophet if any reverses were sustained, resisted the war no longer, but remained armed and watchful, to secure the advantage of events as they might occur.

CHAPTER VIII.

Defeats of the French on the Frontier.—Decay of the Party of Constitutionalists—They form the Club of Feuillans, and are dispersed by the Jacobins forcibly. The Ministry—Dumourier—Versatility of his Character.—Breach of Confidence betwixt the King and his Ministers.—Dissolution of the King's Constitutional Guard.—Extravagant measures of the Jacobins—Alarms of the Girondists.—Departmental army proposed.—King puts his Veto on the Decree, against Dumourier's Representations.—Decree against the Recusant Priests—King refuses it.—Letter of the Ministers to the King—He dismisses Roland, Clavière, and Servan—Dumourier, Duranton, and Lacoste, appointed in their stead.—King ratifies the Decree concerning the Departmental Army.—Dumourier retorts against the late Ministers in the Assembly—Resigns, and departs for the Frontiers.—New Ministers named from the Constitutionalists.—Insurrection of the 20th of June—Armed Mob intrude into the Assembly—Thence into the Tuileries—Assembly send a Deputation to the Palace—And the Mob disperse.—La Fayette repairs to Paris—Remonstrates in favour of the King—But is compelled to return to the Frontiers, and leave him to his fate.—Marseillois appear in Paris.—Duke of Brunswick's Manifesto.—Its Operation against the King.

It is not our purpose here to enter into any detail of military events. It is sufficient to say, that the first results of the war were more

disastrous than could have been expected, even from the want of discipline and state of mutiny in which this call to arms found the troops of France. If Austria, never quick at improving an opportunity, had possessed more forces on the Flemish frontier, or had even pressed her success with the troops she had, events might have occurred to influence, if not to alter, the fortunes of France and her King. They were inactive, however, and La Fayette, who was at the head of the army, exerted himself, not without effect, to rally the spirits of the French, and infuse discipline and confidence into their ranks. But he was able to secure no success of so marked a character as to correspond with the reputation he had acquired in America; so that as the Austrians were few in number, and not very decisive in their movements, the war seemed to languish on both sides.

In Paris, the absence of La Fayette had removed the main stay from the Constitutional interest, which were now nearly reduced to that state of nullity to which they had themselves reduced the party, first of pure Royalists, and then that of the *Modérés*, or friends of limited monarchy, in the first Assembly. The wealthier classes, indeed, continued a fruitless attachment to the Constitutionalists, which gradually diminished with their decreased power to protect their friends. At length this

became so contemptible, that their enemies were emboldened to venture upon an insult, which showed how little they were disposed to keep measures with a feeble adversary.

Among other plans, by which they hoped to counterpoise the omnipotence of the Jacobin Club, the Constitutionalists had established a counter association, termed, from its place of meeting, Les Feuillans. In this Club,—which included about two hundred members of the Legislative Body, the ephemeral rival of the great jacobinical forge in which the Revolutionists had their strength and fabricated their thunders,—there was more eloquence, argument, learning, and wit, than was necessary; but the Feuillans wanted the terrible power of exciting the popular passions, which the orators of the Jacobin Club possessed and wielded at pleasure. These opposed factions might be compared to two swords, of which one had a gilded and ornamented hilt, but a blade formed of glass or other brittle substance, while the brazen handle of the other corresponded in strength and coarseness to the steel of the weapon itself. When two such weapons come into collision, the consequence may be anticipated, and it was so with the opposite clubs. The Jacobins, after many preparatory insults, went down upon and assailed their adversaries with open force, insulting and dispersing them with blows and violence;

while Pétion, the Mayor of Paris, who was present on the occasion, consoled the fugitives, by assuring them that the law indeed protected them, but the people having pronounced against them, it was not for him to enforce the behests of the law in opposition to the will of that people, *from* whom the law originated. A goodly medicine for their aching bones!

The Constitutional party, amidst their general humiliation, had lost almost all influence in the ministry, and could only communicate with the King underhand, and in a secret manner,—as if they had been in fact his friends and partisans, not the causes of, or willing consenters to, his present imprisoned and disabled condition. Of six ministers, by whom De Lessart and his comrades had been replaced, the husband of Madame Roland, and two others, Servan and Clavière, were zealous republicans; Duranton and Lacoste were moderate in their politics, but timorous in character; the sixth, Dumourier, who held the war department, was the personal rival of La Fayette, both in civil and military matters, and the enemy, therefore, of the Constitutional party. It is now, for the first time, that we mention one of those names renowned in military history, which had the address to attract Victory to the French banners, to which she long appeared to adhere without shadow of changing. Dumourier

passed early from the scene, but left his name strongly written in the annals of France.

Dumourier was little in person, but full of vivacity and talent; a brave soldier, having distinguished himself in the civil dissensions of Poland; an able and skilful intriguer, and well fitted to play a conspicuous part in times of public confusion. He has never been supposed to possess any great firmness of principle, whether public or private; but a soldier's honour, and a soldier's frankness, together with the habits of good society, led him to contemn and hate the sordid treachery, cruelty, and cynicism of the Jacobins; while his wit and common sense enabled him to see through and deride the affected and pedantic fanaticism of republican zeal of the Girondists, who, he plainly saw, were amusing themselves with schemes to which the country of France, the age, and the state of manners, were absolutely opposed. Thus, he held the situation of minister at war, coquetting with all parties; wearing one evening in the Jacobin Club the red night-cap, which was the badge of breechless freedom, and the next, with better sincerity, advising the King how he might avoid the approaching evils; though the by-roads he pointed out were often too indirect to be trodden by the good and honest prince, to whom Providence had, in Dumourier, assigned a counsellor better fitted to a less scrupulous

sovereign. The King nevertheless reposed considerable confidence in the general, which, if not answered with all the devotion of loyalty, was at least never betrayed.

The Republican ministers were scarce qualified by their talents, to assume the air of Areopagites, or Roman tribunes. Roland, by himself, was but a tiresome pedant, and he could not bring his wife to the cabinet council, although it is said she attempted to make her way to the ministerial dinners.[1] His colleagues were of the same character, and affected in their intercourse with the King a stoical contempt of the forms of the court, although, in effect, these are like other courtesies of society, which it costs little to observe, and is brutal to neglect.[2] Besides petty insults of this sort, there was a total want of confidence on both sides, in the intercourse betwixt them and the King. If the ministers were

[1] So says De Ferrières, and pretends that Madame Roland's pretensions to be presented at the ministerial parties being rejected, was the first breach to the amicable understanding of the ministers. But nothing of this sort is to be found in Madame Roland's Memoirs, and we are confident she would have recorded it, had the fact been accurate.

[2] When Roland, whose dress was somewhat like that of a quaker, appeared at court in shoe-strings, the usher approached him with a severe look, and addressed him, « How, sir, no buckles! »—« Ah, » said Dumourier, who laughed at all and at every thing, « all is lost. »

desirous to penetrate his sentiments on any particular subject, Louis evaded them by turning the discourse on matters of vague and general import; and did he, on the other hand, press them to adopt any particular measure, they were cold and reserved, and excused themselves under the shelter of their personal responsibility. Indeed, how was it possible that confidence could exist betwixt the King and his Republican ministers, when the principal object of the latter was to procure the abolition of the regal dignity, and when the former was completely aware that such was their purpose?

The first step adopted by the factions of Girondists and Jacobins, who moved towards the same object side by side, though not hand in hand, was to deprive the King of a guard, assigned him by the Constitution, in lieu of his disbanded *Gardes du Corps*. It was, indeed, of doubtful loyalty, being partly levied from soldiers of the line, partly from the citizens, and imbued in many cases with the revolutionary spirit of the day; but they were officered by persons selected for their attachment to the King, and even their name of Guards expressed and inspired an *esprit de corps*, which might be formidable. Various causes of suspicion were alleged against this guard—that they kept in their barracks a white flag (which proved to be the ornament of a cake presented to them by the Dauphin)—that their sword-hilts were

formed into the fashion of a cock, which announced some anti-revolutionary enigma—that attempts were made to alienate them from the Assembly, and fix their affections on the King. The guard contained several spies, who had taken that service for the purpose of betraying its secrets to the Jacobins. Three or four of these men, produced at the bar, affirmed much that was, and much that was not true; and amid the causes they had for distrusting the King, and their reasons for desiring to weaken him, the Assembly decreed the reduction of the Constitutional Guard. The King was with difficulty persuaded not to oppose his *Veto*, and was thus left almost totally undefended to the next blast of the revolutionary tempest.

Every successive proceeding of the factions tended to show more strongly, that the storm was speedily to arise. The invention of the Jacobins exhausted itself in proposing and adopting revolutionary measures so extravagant, that very shame prevented the Girondists from becoming parties to them. Such was the carrying the atrocious cut-throat Jourdan in triumph through the streets of Avignon, where he had piled eighty carcases into a glacière in the course of one night. A less atrocious, but not less insolent proceeding, was the feast given in honour of the regiment of Château Vieux, whose mutiny had been put down at Nancy by Monsieur de Bouillé, acting under

the express decree of the first National Assembly.

In a word, understanding much better than the Brissotins the taste of the vulgar for what was most violent, gross, and exaggerated, the Jacobins purveyed for them accordingly, filled their ears with the most incredible reports, and gulled their eyes by the most absurd pageants.

The Girondists, retaining some taste and some principle, were left far behind in the race of vulgar popularity, where he that throws off every mark of decency bids most fair to gain the prize. They beheld with mortification feats which they could not emulate, and felt that their own assertions of their attachment to freedom, emphatic as they were, seemed cold and spiritless compared to the extravagant and flaming declamations of the Jacobins. They regarded with envy the advantages which their rivals acquired by those exaggerated proceedings, and were startled to find how far they were like to be outstripped by those uncompromising and unhesitating demagogues. The Girondists became sensible that a struggle approached, in which, notwithstanding their strength in the Assembly, they must be vanquished, unless they could raise up some body of forces, entirely dependent on themselves, to be opposed in time of need to the Jacobin insurgents. This was

indeed essentially necessary to their personal safety, and to the stability of their power. If they looked to the National Guard, they found such of that body as were no longer attached to La Fayette, wearied of revolutions, unmoved by the prospect of a republic, and only desirous to protect their shops and property. If they turned their eyes to the lower orders, and especially the suburbs, the myriads of pikemen which they could pour forth were all devoted to the Jacobins, from whom their leaders received orders and regular pay.

The scheme of a departmental army was resorted to by the Girondists as the least startling, yet most certain mode of bringing together a military force sufficient to support the schemes of the new administration. Five men were to be furnished by every canton in France, which would produce a body of 20,000 troops, to be armed and trained under the walls of Paris. This force was to serve as a central army to reinforce the soldiers on the frontier, and maintain order in the capital, as occasion should demand. The measure, proposed by the Girondists, was unexpectedly furthered by the Jacobins, who plainly saw, that through the means of their affiliated societies, which existed in every canton, they would be able to dictate the choice of so large a part of the departmental army, that, when assembled, it

should add to the power of their insurrectionary bands at Paris, instead of controlling them.

The citizens of Paris were disposed to consider this concourse of undisciplined troops under the walls of the city as dangerous to its safety, and an insult to the National Guard, hitherto thought adequate to the defence of the metropolis. They petitioned the Assembly against the measure, and even invoked the King to reject the decree, when it should pass through that body.

To this course Louis was himself sufficiently inclined, for neither he nor any one doubted that the real object of the Girondists was to bring together such an army, as would enable them to declare their beloved republic without fear of La Fayette, even if he should find himself able to bring the army which he commanded to his own sentiments on the subject.

Dumourier warned Louis against following this course of direct opposition to the Assembly. He allowed, that the ultimate purpose of the proposal was evident to every thinking person, but still its ostensible object being the protection of the country and capital, the King, he said, would, in the eyes of the vulgar, be regarded as a favourer of the foreign invasion, if he objected to a measure represented as essential to the protection of Paris. He undertook, as Minister of War, that as fast as a few

hundreds of the departmental forces arrived, he would have them regimented and dismissed to the frontier, where their assistance was more necessary than at home. But all his remonstrances on this subject were in vain. Louis resolved at all risks to place his *Veto* on the measure. He probably relied on the feelings of the National Guard, of which one or two divisions were much attached to him, while the dispositions of the whole had been certainly ameliorated, from their fear of fresh confusion by means of these new levies. Perhaps, also, the King could not bring himself at once to trust the versatile disposition of Dumourier, whose fidelity, however, we see no reason for suspecting.

Another renewed point of discussion and disagreement betwixt the King and his ministers, respected the recusant clergy. A decree was passed in the Assembly, that such priests as might be convicted of a refusal to subscribe the oath to the civil Constitution, should be liable to deportation. This was a point of conscience with Louis, and was probably brought forward in order to hasten him into a resignation of the crown. He stood firm accordingly, and determined to oppose his *Veto* to this decree also, in spite at once of all the arguments which the worldly prudence of Dumourier could object, and of the urgency of the Republican ministers.

The firm refusal of the King disconcerted the measures of the Girondist counsellors. Madame Roland undertook to make the too scrupulous monarch see the errors of his ways; and composed, in name of her husband and two of his colleagues, a long letter, to which Dumourier and the other two refused to place their names. It was written in what the Citoyenne termed an austere tone of truth; that is to say, without any of the usual marks of deference and respect, and with a harshness calculated to jar all the feelings, affectionate or religious, of him whom they still called King. Alas! the severest and most offensive truths, however late in reaching the ears of powerful and prosperous monarchs, make themselves sternly loud to those princes who are captive and unfriended. Louis might have replied to this rude expostulation like the knight who received a blow from an enemy when he was disarmed, and a prisoner,—« There is little bravery in this *now.*» The King, however, gave way to his resentment as far as he could. He dismissed Roland and the other two ministers, and with difficulty prevailed on Dumourier, Duranton, and Lacoste, to retain their situations, and endeavour to supply the place of those whom he had deprived of office; but he was obliged to purchase their adherence, by ratifying the decree concerning the federal or departmental army of

twenty thousand men, on condition that they should rendezvous at Soissons, not at Paris. On the decree against the priests, his resolution continued unmoved, and immovable. Thus Religion, which had for half a century been so slightly regarded in France, at length interposed her influence in deciding the fate of the King and the kingdom.

The three discarded ministers affected to congratulate each other on being released from scenes so uncongenial to their republican virtues and sentiments, as the ante-chambers of a court, where men were forced to wear buckles instead of shoe-strings, or undergo the frowns of ushers and masters of ceremonies, and where patriotic tongues were compelled to practise court-language, and to address a being of the same flesh and blood as their own, with the titles of Sire, and your Majesty. The unhappy pedants were not long in learning that there are constraints worse to undergo than the etiquette of a court, and sterner despots to be found in the ranks of a republic, than the good-humoured and lenient Louis. As soon as dismissed, they posted to the Assembly, to claim the applause due to suffering virtue, and to exhibit their letter to those for whose ears it was really written—the sympathising democrats and the tribunes.

They were accordingly, as victims of their democratic [illegible], received with acclamation;

but the triumph of those who bestowed it was unexpectedly qualified and diminished. Dumourier, who spoke fluently, and had collected proofs for such a moment, overwhelmed the Assembly by a charge of total neglect and incapacity, against Roland and his two colleagues. He spoke of unrecruited armies, ungarrisoned forts, unprovided commissariats, in a tone which compelled the Assembly to receive his denunciations against his late associates in the ministry.

But although his unpleasant and threatening communications made a momentary impression on the Assembly, almost in spite of themselves, the wily and variable orator saw that he could only maintain his ground as minister, by procuring, if possible, the assent of the King to the decree against the recusant clergy. He made a final attempt, along with his ephemeral colleagues; stated his conviction, that the refusal of the King, if persisted in, would be the cause of insurrection; and, finally, tendered his resignation, in case their urgent advice should be neglected. «Think not to terrify me by threats,» replied Louis. «My resolution is fixed.» Dumourier was not a man to perish under the ruins of the throne which he could not preserve. His resignation was again tendered and accepted, not without marks of sensibility on the King's part and his own; and having thus saved a part of his credit with the

Assembly, who respected his talents, and desired to use them against the invaders, he departed from Paris to the frontiers, to lead the van among the French victors.

Louis was now left to the pitiless storm of revolution, without the assistance of any one who could in the least assist him in piloting through the tempest. The few courtiers—or, much better named—the few ancient and attached friends, who remained around his person, possessed neither talents nor influence to aid him; they could but lament his misfortunes and share his ruin. He himself expressed a deep conviction, that his death was near at hand, yet the apprehension neither altered his firmness upon points to which he esteemed his conscience was party, nor changed the general quiet placidity of his temper. A negotiation to resign his crown was, perhaps, the only mode which remained, affording even a chance to avert his fate; but the days of deposed monarchs are seldom long, and no pledge could have assured Louis that any terms which the *Girondists might grant*, would have been ratified by their sterner and uncompromising rivals of the Jacobin party. These men had been long determined to make his body the step to their iniquitous power. They affected to feel for the cause of the people, with the zeal which goes to slaying. They had heaped upon the crown, and its unhappy wearer, all the guilt

and all the misfortunes of the Revolution; it was incumbent on them to show that they were serious in their charge, by rendering Louis a sin-offering for the nation. On the whole, it was the more kingly part not to degrade himself by his own voluntary act, but to await the period which was to close at once his life and his reign. He named his last ministry from the dispirited remnants of the Constitutional party, which still made a feeble and unsupported struggle against the Girondists and Jacobins in the Assembly. They did not long enjoy their precarious office.

The factions last named were now united in the purpose of precipitating the King from his throne by actual and direct force. The voice of the Girondists Vergniaud had already proclaimed in the Assembly. «Terror,» he said, «must, in the name of the people, burst its way into yonder palace, whence she has so often sallied forth at the command of monarchs.»

Though the insurrection was resolved upon, and thus openly announced, each faction was jealous of the force which the other was to employ, and apprehensive of the use which might be made of it against themselves, after the conquest was obtained. But, however suspicious of each other, they were still more desirous of their common object, the destruction of the throne, and the erection of a re-

public, which the Brissotins supposed they could hold under their rule, and which the Jacobins were determined to retain under their misrule. An insurrection was at length arranged, which had all the character of that which brought the King a prisoner from Versailles, the Jacobins being the prime movers of their desperate followers, and the actors on both occasions; while the Girondists, on the 20th June, 1792, hoped, like the Constitutionalists on the 6th October, 1789, to gain the advantage of the enterprise which their own force would have been unable to accomplish. The community, or magistracy, of Paris, which was entirely under the dominion of Robespierre, Danton, and the Jacobins, had been long providing for such an enterprise, and under pretext that they were arming the lower classes against invasion, had distributed pikes and other weapons to the rabble, who were to be used on this occasion.

On the 20th June, the sans-culottes of the suburbs of Saint Marçeau and Saint Antoine assembled together, armed with pikes, scythes, hay-forks, and weapons of every description, whether those actually forged for the destruction of mankind, or those which, invented for peaceful purposes, are readily converted by popular fury into offensive arms. They seemed, notwithstanding their great numbers, to

act under authority, and amid their cries, their songs, their dances, and the wild intermixture of grotesque and fearful revel, appeared to move by command, and to act with an unanimity that gave the effect of order to that which was in itself confusion. They were divided into bodies, and had their leaders. Standards also were displayed, carefully selected to express the character and purpose of the wretches who were assembled under them. One ensign was a pair of tattered breeches, with the motto, « *Vivent les Sans-culottes.* » Another ensign-bearer, dressed in black, carried on a long pole a hog's haslet, that is, part of the entrails of that animal, still bloody, with the legend, « *La fressure d'un Aristocrate.* » This formidable assemblage was speedily recruited by the mob of Paris, to an immense multitude, whose language, gestures, and appearance, all combined to announce some violent catastrophe.

The terrified citizens, afraid of general pillage, concentrated themselves,—not to defend the King or protect the Legislative Assembly, but for the preservation of the Palais Royal, where the splendour of the shops was most likely to attract the cupidity of the sans-culottes. A strong force of armed citizens guarded all the avenues to this temple of Mammon, and, by excluding the insurgents from its precincts, showed what they could

have done for the Hall of the Legislature, or the palace of the monarch, had the cause of either found favour in their eyes.

The insurrection rolled on to the Hall of the Assembly, surrounded the alarmed deputies, and filled with armed men every avenue of approach; talked of a petition which they meant to present, and demanded to file through the Hall to display the force by which it was supported. The terrified members had nothing better to reply, than by a request that the insurgents should only enter the Assembly by a representative deputation—at least that, coming in a body, they should leave their arms behind. The formidable petitioners laughed at both proposals, and poured through the Hall, shaking in triumph their insurrectionary weapons. The Assembly, meanwhile, made rather an ignoble figure; and their attempts to preserve an outward appearance of indifference, and even of cordiality towards their foul and frightful visitants, have been aptly compared to a band of wretched comedians, endeavouring to mitigate the resentment of a brutal and incensed audience.[1]

[1] It may be alleged in excuse, that the Assembly had no resource but submission. Yet, brave men in similar circumstances have, by a timely exertion of spirit, averted similar insolencies. When the furious Anti-Catholic mob was in possession of the avenues to, and even the lobbies of, the House of Commons, in 1780, General Cosmo Gordon, a member of the House, went up to the

From the Hall of the Assembly, the populace rushed to the Tuileries. Preparations had been made for defence, and several bodies of troops were judiciously placed, who, with the advantages afforded by the grates and walls, might have defended their posts against the armed rabble which approached. But there was neither union, loyalty, nor energy, in those to whom the defence was intrusted, nor did the King, by placing himself at their head, attempt to give animation to their courage.

The National Guards drew off at the command of the two municipal officers, decked with their scarfs of office, who charged them not to oppose the will of the people. The grates were dashed to pieces with sledge hammers. The gates of the palace itself were shut, but the rabble, turning a cannon upon them, compelled entrance, and those apartments of royal magnificence, so long the pride

unfortunate nobleman under whose guidance they were supposed to act, and addressed him thus: « My lord, is it your purpose to bring your rascally adherents into the House of Commons?—for if so, I apprise you, that the instant one of them enters, I pass my sword, not through his body, but your lordship's.» The hint was sufficient, and the mob was directed to another quarter. Undoubtedly there were, in the French Legislative Assembly, men capable of conjuring down the storm they had raised, and who might have been moved to do so, had any man of courage made them directly and personally responsible for the consequences.

of France, were laid open to the multitude, like those of Troy to her invaders;—

> Apparet domus intus, et atria longa patescunt,
> Apparent Priami et veterum penetralia regum.[1]

The august palace of the proud house of Bourbon lay thus exposed to the rude gaze, and vulgar tread, of a brutal and ferocious rabble. Who dared have prophesied such an event to the royal founders of this stately pile, to the chivalrous Henry of Navarre, or the magnificent Louis XIV.!—The door of the apartment entering into the vestibule was opened by the hands of Louis himself, the ill-fated representative of this lofty line. He escaped with difficulty the thrust of a bayonet, made as the door was in the act of expanding. There were around him a handful of courtiers, and a few of the grenadiers of the National Guard, belonging to the section of Filles Saint

[1] Dryden has expanded these magnificent lines, without expressing entirely either their literal meaning or their spirit. But he has added, as usual, beautiful ideas of his own, equally applicable to the scene described in the text:

> A mighty breach is made; the rooms conceal'd
> Appear, and all the palace is reveal'd;
> The halls of audience, and of public state,
> And where the lovely queen in secret sate;
> Arm'd soldiers now by trembling maids are seen,
> With not a door, and scarce a space between.
>
> *Æneid*, Book II.

Thomas, which had been always distinguished for fidelity. They hurried and almost forced the King into the embrasure of a window, erected a sort of barricade in front with tables, and stood beside him as his defenders. The crowd, at their first entrance, levelled their pikes at Madame Elizabeth, whom they mistook for the Queen. « Why did you undeceive them?» said the heroic princess to those around her—«It might have saved the life of my sister.» Even the insurgents were affected by this trait of heroism. They had encountered none of those obstacles which chafe such minds, and make them thirsty of blood, and it would seem that their leaders had not received decided orders, or, having received them, did not think the time served for their execution. The insurgents defiled through the apartments, and passed the King, now joined by the Queen with her children. The former, though in the utmost personal danger, would not be separated from her husband, exclaiming, that her post was by his side; the latter were weeping with terror at a scene so horrible.

The people seemed moved, or rather their purpose was deprived of that energetic unanimity which had hitherto carried them so far. Some shouted against the veto—some against the unconstitutional priests, some more modestly called out for lowering the price of bread and butcher-meat. One of them flung

a red cap to the King, who quietly drew it upon his head; another offered him a bottle, and commanded him to drink to the Nation. No glass could be had, and he was obliged to drink out of the bottle. These incidents are grotesque and degrading, but they are redeemed by one of much dignity. «Fear nothing, Sire,» said one of the faithful grenadiers of the National Guard who defended him. The King took his hand, and pressing it to his heart, replied, «Judge yourself if I fear.»

Various leaders of the Republicans were present at this extraordinary scene, in the apartments, or in the garden, and expressed themselves according to their various sentiments. «What a figure they have made of him with the red night-cap and the bottle!» said Manuel, the Procureur of the Commune of Paris.—«What a magnificent spectacle!» said the artist David, looking out upon the tumultuary sea of pikes, agitated by fifty thousand hands, as they rose and sunk, welked and waved; — «Tremble, tremble, tyrants!»— «They are in a fair train,» said the fierce Gorsas; «we shall soon see their pikes garnished with several heads.» The crowds who thrust forward into the palace and the presence were pressed together till the heat increased almost to suffocation, nor did there appear any end to the confusion.

Late and slow, the Legislative Assembly did

at length send a deputation of twenty-five members to the palace. The arrival put an end to the tumult; for Pétion, the Mayor of Paris, and the other authorities, who had hitherto been well nigh passive, now exerted themselves to clear away the armed populace from the palace and gardens, and were so readily obeyed, that it was evident that similar efforts would have entirely prevented the insurrection. The « poor and virtuous people, » as Robespierre used to call them, with an affected unction of pronunciation, retired for once with their pikes unbloodied, not a little marvelling why they had been called together for such a harmless purpose.

That a mine so formidable should have exploded without effect, gave some momentary advantages to the party at whose safety it was aimed. Men of worth exclaimed against the infamy of such a gratuitous insult to the Crown, while it was still called a Constitutional authority. Men of substance dreaded the recurrence of such acts of revolutionary violence, and the commencement of riots, which were likely to end in pillage. Petitions were presented to the Assembly, covered with the names of thousands, praying that the leaders of the insurgents should be brought to punishment; while the King demanded, in a tone which seemed to appeal to France and to Europe, some satisfaction for his insulted dig-

nity, the violation of his palace, and the danger of his person. But La Fayette, at the head of an army whose affections he was supposed to possess, was the most formidable intercessor. He had two or three days before transmitted to the Assembly a letter, or rather a remonstance, in which, speaking in the name of the army, as well as his own, he expressed the highest dissatisfaction with the recent events at Paris, complaining of the various acts of violation of the constitution, and the personal disrespect offered to the King. This letter of itself had been accounted an enormous offence, both by the Jacobins and the Girondists; but the tumult of the 20th of June roused the general to bolder acts of intercession.

On the 28th of the same month of June, all parties heard with as much interest as anxiety, that General La Fayette was in Paris. He came, indeed, only with a part of his staff. Had he brought with him a moderate body of troops upon whom he could have absolutely depended, his presence so supported, in addition to his influence in Paris, would have settled the point at issue. But the general might hesitate to diminish the French army then in front of the enemy, and by doing so to take on himself the responsibility of what might happen in his absence; or, as it appeared from subsequent events, he may not have dared to

repose the necessary confidence in any corps of his army, so completely had they been imbued with the revolutionary spirit. Still his arrival, thus slightly attended, indicated a confidence in his own resources, which was calculated to strike the opposite party with anxious apprehension.

He appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and addressed the members in a strain of decision which had not been lately heard on the part of those who pleaded the royal cause in that place. He denounced the authors of the violence committed on the 20th of June, declared that several corps of his army had addressed him, and that he came to express their horror as well as his own at the rapid progress of faction; and to demand that such measures should be taken as to ensure the defenders of France, that while they were shedding their blood on the frontiers, the Constitution, for which they combated, should not be destroyed by traitors in the interior. This speech, delivered by a man of great courage and redoubted influence, had considerable effect. The Girondists, indeed, proposed to inquire, whether La Fayette had permission from the Minister of War to leave the command of his army; and sneeringly affirmed, that the Austrians must needs have retreated from the frontier, since the general of the French army had returned to Paris: but

a considerable majority preferred the motion of the Constitutionalist Ramond, who, eulogising La Fayette as the eldest son of Liberty, proposed an inquiry into the causes and object of those factious proceedings of which he had complained.

Thus happily commenced La Fayette's daring enterprise; but those by whom he expected to be supported did not rally around him. To disperse the Jacobin Club was probably his object, but no sufficient force gathered about him to encourage the attempt. He ordered for the next day a general review of the National Guards, in hopes, doubtless, that they would have recognized the voice which they had obeyed with such unanimity of submission; but this civic force was by no means in the state in which he had left them at his departure. The several corps of grenadiers, which were chiefly drawn from the more opulent classes, had been, under pretence of the general principle of equality, melted down and united with those composed of men of an inferior description, and who had a more decided revolutionary tendency. Many officers, devoted to La Fayette and the Constitution, had been superseded; and the service was, by studied contumely and ill usage, rendered disgusting to those who avowed the same sentiments, or displayed any remaining attachment to the sovereign. By such means

Pétion, the Mayor of Paris, had now authority enough with the civic army to prevent the review from taking place. A few grenadiers of different sections did indeed muster, but their number was so small that they dispersed in haste and alarm.

The Girondists and Jacobins, closely united at this crisis, began to take heart, yet dared not on their part venture to arrest the general. Meantime La Fayette saw no other means of saving the King than to propose his anew attempting an escape from Paris, which he offered to further by every means in his power. The plan was discussed, but dismissed in consequence of the Queen's prejudices against La Fayette, whom, not unnaturally (though as far as regarded intention certainly unjustly), she regarded as the original author of the King's misfortunes. After two days' lingering in Paris, La Fayette found it necessary to return to the army which he commanded, and leave the King to his fate.

La Fayette's conduct on this occasion may always be opposed to any aspersions thrown on his character at the commencement of the Revolution; for, unquestionably, in June, 1792, he exposed his own life to the most imminent danger in order to protect that of the King, and the existence of royalty. Yet he must himself have felt a lesson, which his fate may teach to others; how perilous, namely, it is, to

set the example of violent and revolutionary courses, and what dangerous precedents such rashness may afford to those who use similar means for carrying events to still farther extremities. The march to Versailles, 6th October, 1789, in which La Fayette to a certain degree co-operated, and of which he reaped all the immediate advantage, had been the means of placing Louis in that precarious situation from which he was now so generously anxious to free him. It was no less La Fayette's own act, by means of his personal aide-de-camp, to bring back the person of the King to Paris from Varennes; whereas he was now recommending, and offering to further his escape, by precisely such measures as his interference had then thwarted.

Notwithstanding the low state of the royal party, one constituted authority, amongst so many, had the courage to act offensively on the weaker and the injured side. The Directory of the Department (or province) of Paris, declared against the mayor, imputed to him the blame of the scandalous excesses of the 20th of June, and suspended him and Manuel, the procureur of the Community of Paris, from their offices. This judgment was affirmed by the King. But, under the protection of the Girondists and Jacobins, Pétion appealed to the Assembly, where the demon of discord seemed now let loose, as the ad-

vantage was contended for by at least three parties, avowedly distinct from each other, together with innumerable subdivisions of opinion. And yet, in the midst of such complicated and divided interests, such various and furious passions, two individuals, a lady and a bishop, undertook to restore general concord; and, singular to tell, they had a momentary success. Olympia de Gouges was an ardent lover of liberty, but she united with this passion an intense feeling of devotion, and a turn like that entertained by our friends the Quakers, and other sects who affect a transcendental love of the human kind, and interpret the doctrines of christian morality in the most strict and literal sense. This person had sent abroad several publications, recommending to all citizens of France, and the deputies especially of the Assembly, to throw aside personal views, and form a brotherly and general union with heart and hand, in the service of the public.

The same healing overture, as it would have been called in the civil dissensions of England, was brought before the Assembly,[1] and recommended by the constitutional Bishop of Lyons, the Abbé Lamourette. This good-natured orator affected to see, in the divisions which rent the Assembly to pieces, only the

[1] 9th July.

result of an unfortunate error—a mutual misunderstanding of each other's meaning. «You,» he said to the Republican members, « are afraid of an undue attachment to aristocracy; you dread the introduction of the English system of two Chambers into the Constitution. You of the right hand, on the contrary, misconstrue your peaceful and ill-understood brethren, so far as to suppose them capable of renouncing monarchy, as established by the Constitution. What then remains to extinguish these fatal divisions, but for each party to disown the designs falsely imputed to them, and for the Assembly united to swear anew their devotion to the Constitution, as it has been bequeathed to us by the Constituent Assembly!»

This speech, wonderful as it may seem, had the effect of magic; the deputies of every faction, Royalist, Constitutionalist, Girondist, Jacobin, and Orleanist, rushed into each other's arms, and mixed tears with the solemn oaths by which they renounced the innovations supposed to be imputed to them. The King was sent for to enjoy this spectacle of concord, so strangely and so unexpectedly renewed. But the feeling, though strong,—and it might be with many overpowering for the moment,—was but like oil spilt on the raging sea, or rather like a shot fired across the waves of a torrent, which, though it counteracts them by

its momentary impulse, cannot for a second alter their course. The factions, like Le Sage's demons, detested each other the more for having been compelled to embrace, and from the name and country of the benevolent bishop, the scene was long called, in ridicule, *le Baiser d'Amourette*, and *la Réconciliation Normande.*

The next public ceremony showed how little party spirit had been abated by this singular scene. The King's acceptance of the Constitution was repeated in the Champ de Mars before the Federates, or deputies sent up to represent the various departments of France; and the figure made by the King during that pageant formed a striking and melancholy parallel with his actual condition in the state. With hair powdered and dressed, with clothes embroidered in the ancient court-fashion, surrounded and crowded unceremoniously by men of the lowest rank, and in the most wretched garbs, he seemed something belonging to a former age, but which in the present has lost its fashion and value. He was conducted to the Champ de Mars under a strong guard, and by a circuitous route, to avoid the insults of the multitude, who dedicated their applauses to the Girondist Mayor of Paris, exclaiming « Pétion or Death! » When he ascended the altar to go through the ceremonial of the day, all were struck with the resemblance to a victim led to sacrifice, and the

Queen so much so, that she exclaimed and nearly fainted. A few children alone called, *Vive le Roi!* This was the last time Louis was seen in public until he mounted the scaffold.

The departure of La Fayette renewed the courage of the Girondists, and they proposed a decree of impeachment against him in the Assembly; but the spirit which the general's presence had awakened was not yet extinguished, and his friends in the Assembly undertook his defence with a degree of unexpected courage, which alarmed their antagonists. Nor could their fears be termed groundless. The Constitutional general might march his army upon Paris or he might make some accommodation with the foreign invaders, and receive assistance from them to accomplish such a purpose. It seemed to the Girondists, that no time was to be lost. They determined not to trust to the Jacobins, to whose want of resolution they seem to have ascribed the failure of the insurrection on the 20th of June. They resolved upon occasion of the next effort, to employ some part of that departmental force, which was now approaching Paris in straggling bodies, under the name of Federates. The affiliated clubs had faithfully obeyed the mandates of the parent society of the Jacobins, by procuring that the most staunch and exalted Revolutionists should be sent on this service. These men, or the greater part of them, chose to visit Paris, rather than to

pass straight to their rendezvous at Soissons. As they believed themselves the armed representatives of the country, they behaved with all the insolence which the consciousness of bearing arms gives to those who are unaccustomed to discipline. They walked in large bodies in the Garden of the Tuileries, and when any persons of the royal family appeared, they insulted the ladies with obscene language and indecent songs, the men with the most hideous threats. The Girondists resolved to frame a force, which might be called their own, out of such formidable materials.

Barbaroux, one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the Revolution, a youth like the Seid of Voltaire's tragedy, filled with the most devoted enthusiasm for a cause of which he never suspected the truth, offered to bring up a battalion of Federates from his native city of Marseilles, men, as he describes them, who knew how to die, and who, as it proved, understood at least as well how to kill. In raking up the disgusting history of mean and bloody-minded demagogues, it is impossible not to dwell on the contrast afforded by the generous and self-devoted character of Barbaroux, who, young, handsome, generous, noble-minded, and disinterested, sacrificed his family-happiness, his fortune, and finally his life, to an enthusiastic though mistaken zeal for the liberty of his country. He had become from the commence-

ment of the Revolution one of its greatest champions at Marseilles, where it had been forwarded and opposed by all the fervour of faction, influenced by the southern sun. He had admired the extravagant writings of Marat and Robespierre; but when he came to know them personally, he was disgusted with their low sentiments and savage dispositions, and went to worship Freedom amongst the Girondists, where her shrine was served by the fair and accomplished Citoyenne Roland.

The Marseillois, besides the advantage of this enthusiastic leader, marched to the air of the finest hymn to which liberty or the Revolution had yet given birth. They appeared in Paris, where it had been agreed between the Jacobins and the Girondists, that the strangers should be welcomed by the fraternity of the suburbs, and whatever other force the factions could command. Thus united, they were to march to secure the municipality, occupy the bridges and principal posts of the city with detached parties, while the main body should proceed to form an encampment in the Garden of the Tuileries, where the conspirators had no doubt they should find themselves sufficiently powerful to exact the King's resignation, or declare his forfeiture.

This plan failed through the cowardice of Santerre, the chief leader of the insurgents of the suburbs, who had engaged to meet the

Marseillois with forty thousand men. Very few of the promised auxiliaries appeared; but the undismayed Marseillois, though only about five hundred in number, marched through the city to the terror of the inhabitants, their keen black eyes seeming to seek out aristocratic victims, and their songs partaking of the wild Moorish character that lingers in the south of France, denouncing vengeance on kings, priests, and nobles.

In the Tuileries the Federates fixed a quarrel on some grenadiers of the National Guard, who were attached to the Constitution, and giving instant way to their habitual impetuosity, attacked, defeated, and dispersed them. In the riot, d'Eprémenil, who had headed the opposition to the will of the King in Parliament, which led the way to the Convocation of Estates, and who had been once the idol of the people, but now had become the object of their hate, was cut down and about to be massacred. « Assist me,» he called out to Pétion, who had come to the scene of confusion,—« I am d'Eprémenil—once, as you are now, the minion of the people's love.» Pétion, not unmoved, it is to be supposed, at the terms of the appeal, hastened to rescue him. Not long afterwards both suffered by the guillotine, which was the bloody conclusion of so many popular favourites. The riot was complained of by the Constitutional party, but as usual it

was explained by a declaration on the part of ready witnesses, that the forty civic soldiers had insulted and attacked the five hundred Marseillois, and therefore brought the disaster upon themselves.

Meanwhile, though their hands were strengthened by this band of unscrupulous and devoted implements of their purpose, the Girondists failed totally in their attempt against La Fayette in the Assembly, the decree of accusation against him being rejected by a victorious majority. They were therefore induced to resort to measures of direct violence, which unquestionably they would willingly have abstained from, since they could not attempt them without giving a perilous superiority to the Jacobin faction. The manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, and his arrival on the French frontier at the head of a powerful Prussian army, acted upon the other motives for insurrection, as a high pressure upon a steam-engine, producing explosion.

It was the misfortune of Louis, as we have often noticed, to be as frequently injured by the false measures of his friends as by the machinations of his enemies; and this proclamation, issued by a monarch who had taken arms in the King's cause, was couched in language intolerable to the feelings even of such Frenchmen as might still retain towards their King some sentiments of loyalty. All

towns or villages which should offer the slightest resistance to the allies, were in this ill-timed manifesto menaced with fire and sword. Paris was declared responsible for the safety of Louis, and the most violent threats of the total subversion of that great metropolis were denounced as the penalty.

The Duke of Brunswick was undoubtedly induced to assume this tone, by the ease which he had experienced in putting down the revolution in Holland; but the cases were by no means parallel. Holland was a country much divided in political opinions, and there was existing among the constituted authorities a strong party in favour of the Stadtholder. France, on the contrary, excepting only the emigrants who were in the duke's own army, was united, like the Jews of old, against foreign invasion, though divided into many bitter factions within itself. Above all, the comparative strength of France and Holland were so different, that a force which might overthrow the one country, without almost a struggle, would scarce prove sufficient to wrest from such a nation as France even the most petty of her frontier fortresses. It cannot be doubted, that this haughty and insolent language on the part of the invaders irritated the personal feelings of every true Frenchman, and determined them to the most obstinate resistance against invaders, who were con-

fident enough to treat them as a conquered people, even before a skirmish had been fought. The imprudence of the allied general recoiled on the unfortunate Louis, on whose account he used this menacing language. Men began to consider his cause as identified with that of the invaders, of course as standing in diametrical opposition to that of the country; and these opinions spread generally among the citizens of Paris. To animate the citizens to their defence, the Assembly declared that the country was in danger; and in order that the annunciation might be more impressive, cannon were hourly discharged from the Hôtel des Invalides—bands of military music traversed the streets—bodies of men were drawn together hastily, as if the enemy were at the gates—and all the hurried and hasty movements of the constituted authorities seemed to announce, that the invaders were within a day's march of Paris.

These distracting and alarming movements, with the sentiments of fear and anxiety which they were qualified to inspire, aggravated the unpopularity of Louis, in whose cause his brothers and his allies were now threatening the metropolis of France. From these concurring circumstances the public voice was indeed so strongly against the cause of monarchy, that the Girondists ventured by their organ, Vergniaud, to accuse the King in the Assembly of

holding intelligence with the enemy, or at least of omitting sufficient defensive preparations, and proposed in express terms that they should proceed to declare his forfeiture. The orator, however, did not press this motion, willing, doubtless, that the power of carrying through and enforcing such a decree should be completely ascertained, which could only be after a mortal struggle with the last defenders of the Crown; but when a motion like this could be made and seconded, it showed plainly how little respect was preserved for the King in the Assembly at large. For this struggle all parties were arranging their forces, and it became every hour more evident, that the capital was speedily to be the scene of some dreadful event.

END OF VOL. I.